



Loving Care

Birth to 6 Months



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Loving Care: Birth to 6 Months

Loving Care is a series of four booklets for parents of children from birth to age 3 developed by Nova Scotia's Department of Health Promotion and Protection. As a public health resource, Loving Care focuses on information that will help young families to protect, promote, or improve their health, and to prevent illness, injury, or disability.

The information in this booklet is up-to-date as of the date of printing. This information is not a substitute for the advice of a health professional.

Loving Care: Birth to 6 Months was developed by the Parent Health Education Resource Working Group:

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Introduction



Loving care is what every baby needs. It's what every parent wants to give.

Loving Care is also the title of this series of booklets for parents. Each booklet gives information based on the age of your baby or child. We try to answer the questions you'll have as your tiny newborn grows into a busy toddler.

The information in all of the Loving Care booklets applies mainly to healthy, full-term babies.

If your baby is premature or has special needs, you'll still find these booklets helpful. However, you may want to look for more information from other sources.

Babies are born into and raised by many kinds of families. You may be older or young. You may be on your own, married, in a relationship, or co-parenting. You may be gay, lesbian, transgender, or straight. You may have lots of family around or you may be far from home. You may be birthing your baby or adopting. You may be having one baby, or two, or more!

All babies need love and care. All kinds of parents and all kinds of families can give babies the love and care they need.

All parents have hopes, fears and feelings. Becoming a parent is the start of a relationship between you and your baby that lasts forever. You grow and learn as a parent by watching and listening to your baby. Your baby grows and learns with your love and support.

Life is a journey of discovery that you and your baby are taking together. No parent starts out having all the answers.

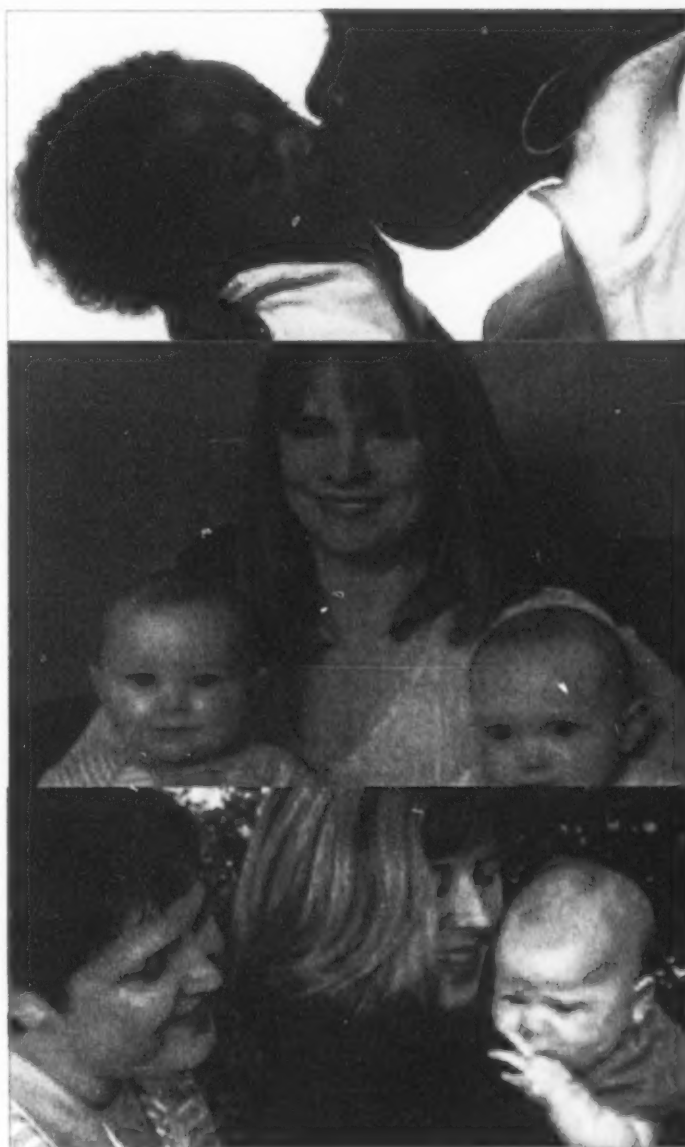
Enjoy these first weeks and months with your baby. This is a special time when you get to know—and fall in love with—your baby.

Life is a journey of discovery that you and your baby are taking together. No parent starts out having all the answers. Every day brings something new. You and your baby will both discover new skills and new strengths as you go along.

We hope these booklets will help you on your journey and will help you to make your own decisions about what's best for you and your family.

He or she?

In this book, we take turns using "he" or "she." Please know that whichever word we use, the information applies to both boys and girls.



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Loving care is what every baby needs. It's what every parent wants to give.



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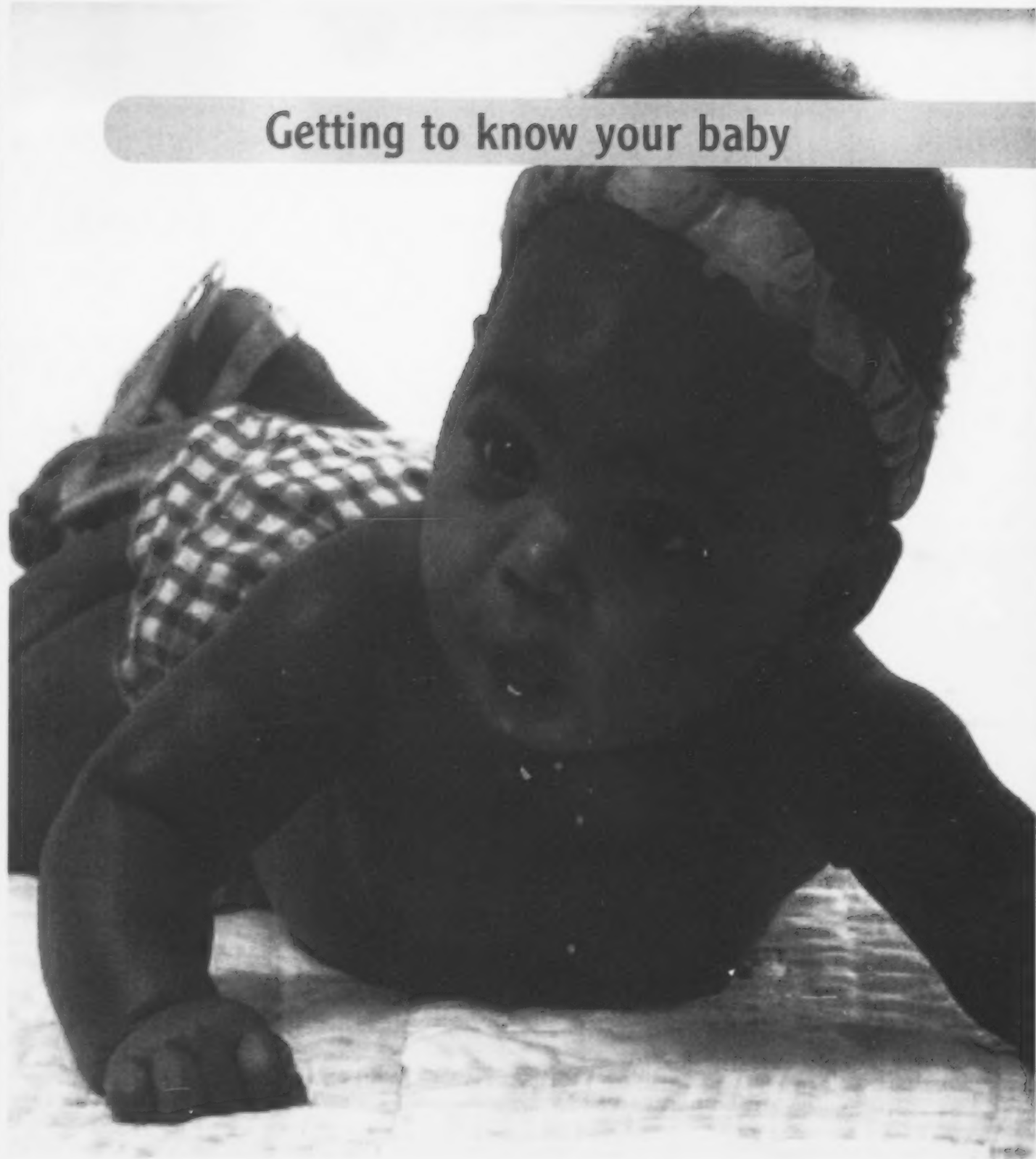
Thanks!

What your baby is telling you.....2

Baby temperament.....4

Getting to know your baby

Getting to know your baby



I was happy when I brought my baby home, but I was scared, too. How would I ever figure out what she needed? How would I know what to do?

What your baby is telling you

Babies don't have wants. They only have needs. When you respond to your baby, you are not spoiling her. You are giving her what she needs to grow and be well.

Your baby can't talk yet, but she has ways to let you know what she needs. These are called "cues."

Pay attention to your baby. You'll soon begin to understand her cues and see what she's telling you.

Your baby is telling you, "I'm hungry," by:

- Holding hands or fists over her chest
- Sucking on her fingers or fist
- Turning toward your body with her mouth open
- Smacking her lips
- Sticking out her tongue
- Making sucking sounds
- Crying

Your baby is telling you, "I'm full," by:

- Turning away
- Closing her mouth
- Falling asleep
- Relaxing her hands and arms



Your baby is telling you "I'm tired," or "I need a break," by:

- Looking away
- Fussing
- Crying
- Hiccupping
- Making faces—wrinkling her forehead, frowning
- Opening and closing her eyes
- Arching her back
- Squirming
- Kicking
- Pulling away

Your baby is telling you "I want you," "I'm lonely," or "Play with me," by:

- Turning toward you
- Looking at your face with bright, wide eyes
- Reaching for you
- Making soft sounds
- Raising her head
- Smiling

Your baby is telling you, "I'm sleepy," by:

- Becoming calmer, quieter and less active
- Slowly opening and closing her eyes
- Yawning
- Sucking more and more slowly



Your baby wants you to know...

Let me know you love me! Your smiling face, soft voice, and gentle touch all tell me you love me.

I thought all babies were the same. But my baby is NOTHING like my sister's. Her baby is quiet and cuddly. Mine is noisy and pulls away when I try to cuddle. Is something wrong with my baby?

Baby temperament

Every baby is born with his own temperament. Temperament is what makes one baby quiet and another baby noisy. It's what makes one baby calm and another baby fussy. It's what makes one baby cuddly and another squirmy.

These differences are what make every baby his own special person.

A baby's temperament affects how he sees the world and how the world reacts to him. For example, most of us can't help smiling when we see a smiling baby. It takes more effort to smile at a baby who isn't smiling at you.

A baby develops his personality by interacting with the world around him. How you respond to your baby's temperament will have a big effect on the kind of person he becomes.

Babies with the same temperament can develop different personalities depending on how parents and others respond to them.

It's up to you to understand and respond to your baby's temperament in ways that will help him feel safe and loved. Your baby can't change who he is. But you can change what you expect from him and how you respond.

When you understand your baby's temperament, you can find ways to work with it. For example, if

your baby gets upset when lots of new people fuss over him, you can keep visits short. Or you can take your baby to a quieter room to calm down when he starts to get fussy.

Getting to know how to respond to your baby's temperament can take time and practice. It may take a while for you to figure out what your baby needs to feel safe and happy. All parents learn by trying things until they find something that works. Keep trying.

As you respond to your baby, you are developing a bond of love and trust. When you accept your baby's temperament and respond to him with loving care, your baby will learn to feel good about himself. And you'll feel good too!



Added info...

People often ask new parents if they have a "good baby." They mean, "Does your baby sleep a lot and cry very little?" But parents may wonder, "If my baby's not like that, does it mean he's a 'bad' baby?"

There are no "good" or "bad" babies. Every baby's temperament is a mix of qualities that parents can find easy to handle or hard to deal with.

Your job as a parent is to understand your child's temperament and love him for who he is.

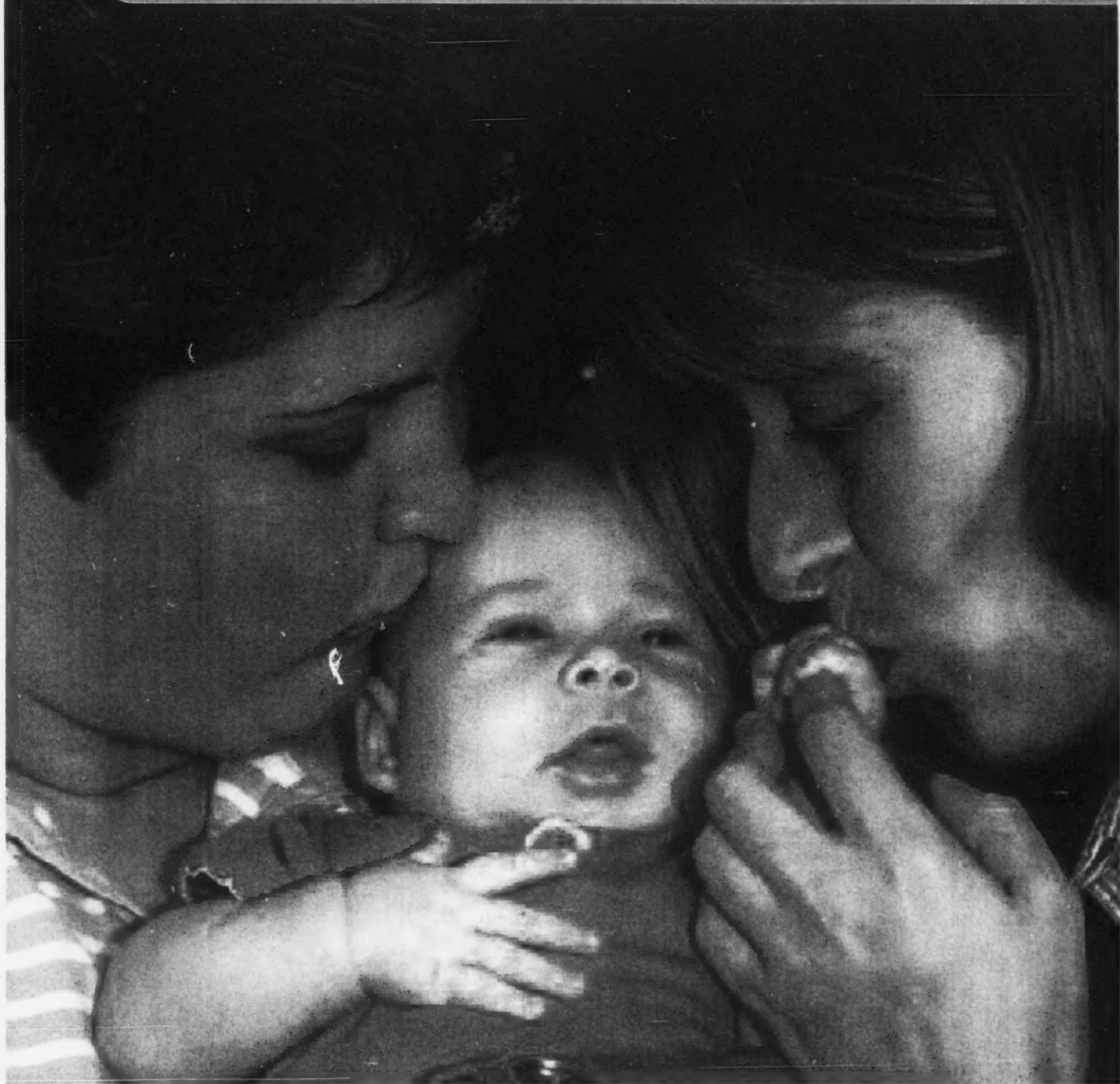
Your baby wants you to know...

You are my world. I see myself through your eyes. I need to know that you love me just the way I am.

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Help your baby learn to love



I've heard that something called "attachment" is very important for a baby. But what exactly is attachment and how do I make it happen?

Attachment

Attachment is a bond of love and trust between parent and child. You build this bond when you pay attention to your baby and respond to her needs.

Your baby depends on you for everything. She needs to learn that she can trust you to come every time she needs you.

When you respond to your baby with loving care, you aren't spoiling her. You are teaching her that:

- She can trust and depend on you.
- She is important to you.
- She matters.
- Her world is a good and safe place.

You are teaching her what it feels like to be loved. You are building a bond of attachment between you and your baby.



How your baby thinks, feels, and acts for the rest of her life depends on this bond. When the bond between you and your baby is strong, she can love, learn, and grow. She can be healthy and happy. She will be able to give you—and others—the love you have given her. A healthy relationship with you will enable her to have healthy relationships throughout her life.

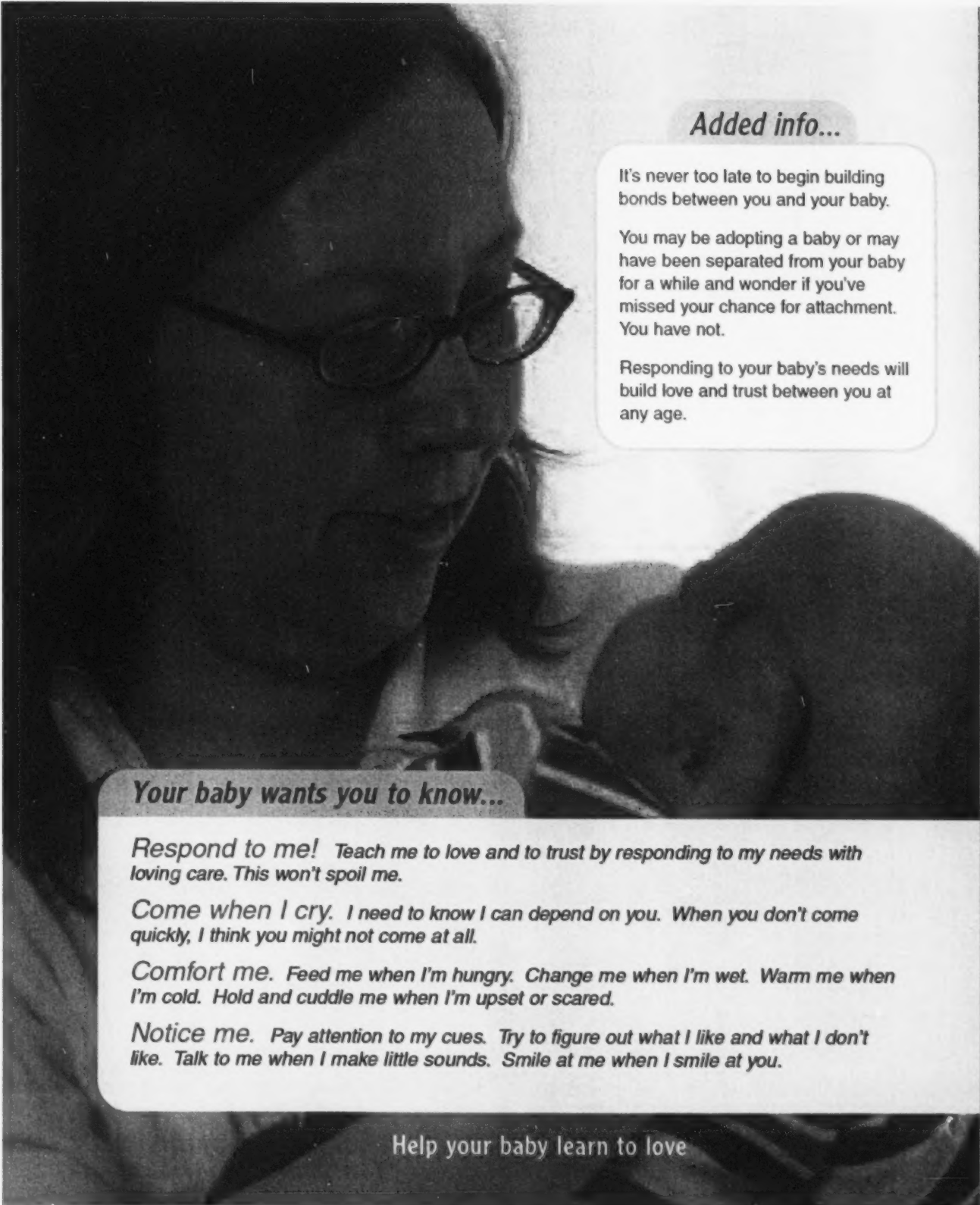
Attachment doesn't happen all at once. It takes time to develop. As your baby grows, the bond of love and trust between you grows too. This attachment between you and your baby will keep growing and will last a lifetime.

Added info...

You may find it hard to respond to your child with the love and care she needs. There are many reasons for this—for example, you may have had a difficult childhood yourself.

You need to deal with your own feelings so you can build a loving bond with your baby.

If you are worried about this, talk to a health care provider or family resource centre. They can help you to get the support you need. (Contact information, page 101)



Added info...

It's never too late to begin building bonds between you and your baby.

You may be adopting a baby or may have been separated from your baby for a while and wonder if you've missed your chance for attachment. You have not.

Responding to your baby's needs will build love and trust between you at any age.

Your baby wants you to know...

Respond to me! Teach me to love and to trust by responding to my needs with loving care. This won't spoil me.

Come when I cry. I need to know I can depend on you. When you don't come quickly, I think you might not come at all.

Comfort me. Feed me when I'm hungry. Change me when I'm wet. Warm me when I'm cold. Hold and cuddle me when I'm upset or scared.

Notice me. Pay attention to my cues. Try to figure out what I like and what I don't like. Talk to me when I make little sounds. Smile at me when I smile at you.

Help your baby learn to love

Skin-to-skin contact with your baby



Newborn babies love skin-to-skin contact.

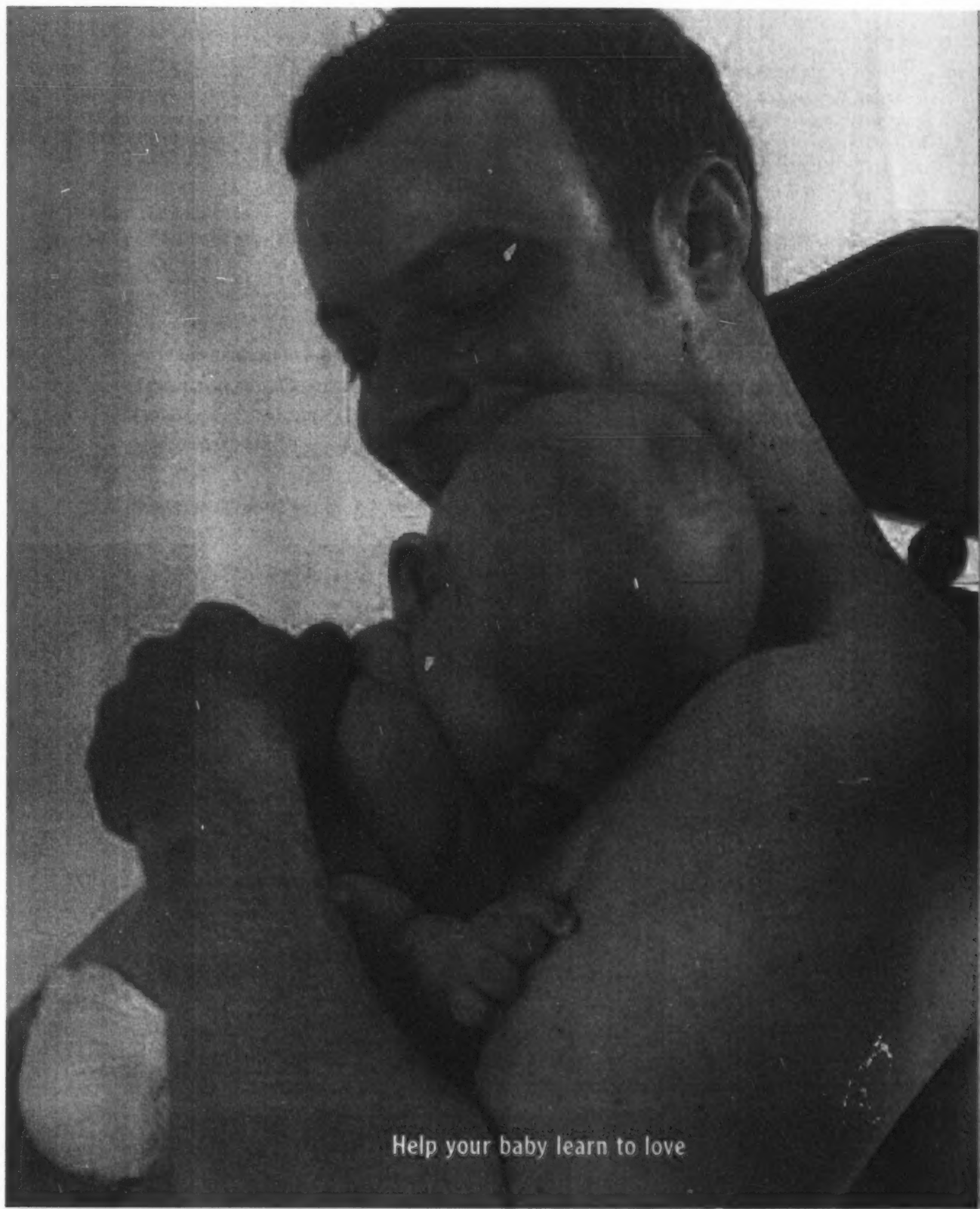
Snuggling against their mother's chest right after birth helps babies get used to the outside world after being born. It helps keep their heart rate, blood pressure, breathing, and body temperature normal. Babies who get skin-to-skin contact cry less. It helps them feel safe, warm, and calm.

Snuggling your baby skin-to-skin in the weeks after birth helps you to feel close to your baby. It lets your baby learn how you feel and smell. It's a way of connecting with your baby and building bonds of love and attachment that last a lifetime.

Added info...

To cuddle skin-to-skin, lay your naked baby belly down on your chest and cover her with a blanket.

Dads and partners can snuggle skin-to-skin with their baby, too.

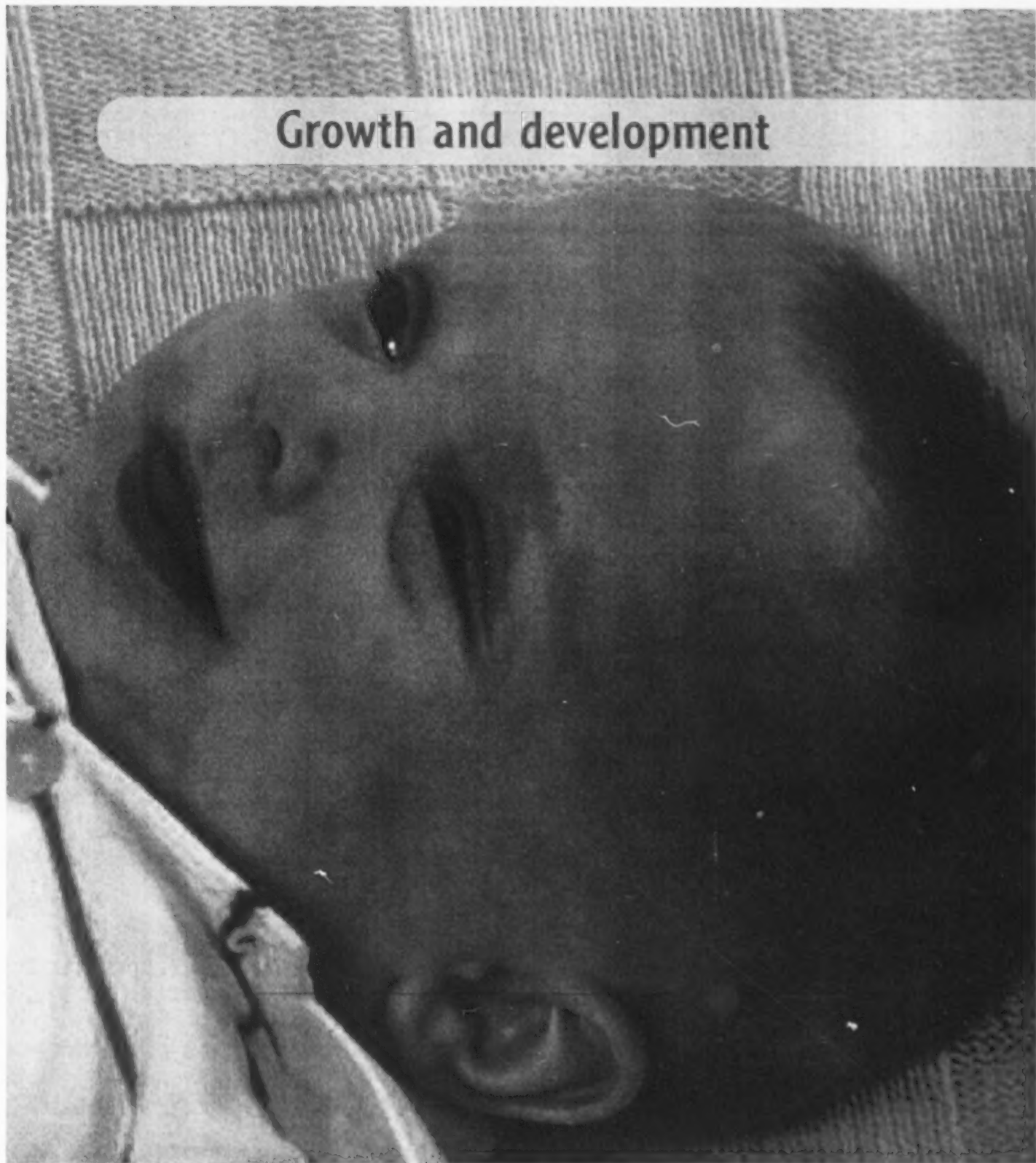


Skin-to-skin contact with your baby

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Growth and development



My baby is so small! He seems so helpless. What can he do? How much can he see? Can he hear me?

Step by step

From the minute your baby is born, he's busy doing two things:

- Growing: Getting stronger, growing longer, and gaining weight.
- Developing: Learning new things and being able to do new things.

Babies grow and develop step by step over time. As they grow bigger and stronger, they're able to develop new skills.

Every baby grows and develops at his own pace. Your baby needs your help to grow and develop into a healthy, happy person.

When you feed and take care of your baby, you help him to grow.

When you pay attention to him and play with him, you help him to develop. You teach him about himself and his world.



Added info...

In this book we use the term "health care provider" to mean any of a number of professionals who can help parents and families. These include:

- Dentists
- Dental hygienists
- Doctors
- Midwives
- Nurses
- Nurse Practitioners
- Pharmacists
- Psychologists
- Public health nurses
- Public health nutritionists
- Registered dietitians
- Registered social workers

Added info...

If your baby is premature or has health concerns, he will develop in different ways and at different times than other babies. Check with your health care provider about what's normal for your baby.

What a newborn baby can do

From the moment they're born, babies have abilities that will help them to learn and grow. Your newborn baby can:

See

- New babies see light and dark, black and white shapes, and bright colours.
- They see things clearly when they are 18 to 25 cm (7 to 10 inches) away.
- They blink at bright lights.
- They stare at faces.



Hear

- New babies hear very well.
- They turn toward a sound or voice.
- Gentle sounds soothe.
- Sudden or loud noises startle them.



Move

- New babies move their arms and legs.
- They hold your finger.
- They turn their heads.
- They lift their head for a few seconds when lying on their tummy.



Make sounds

- New babies cry.
- They make soft little sounds.



Added info...

Your baby's hearing should be tested in the hospital after birth.

If for some reason your baby's hearing hasn't been checked, contact your local public health office. (Contact information, page 100)

Added info...

Babies can also FEEL. It's important to hold them close. Babies love to be held skin-to-skin and to hear your heartbeat. This not only makes them feel good, it helps them grow and develop.

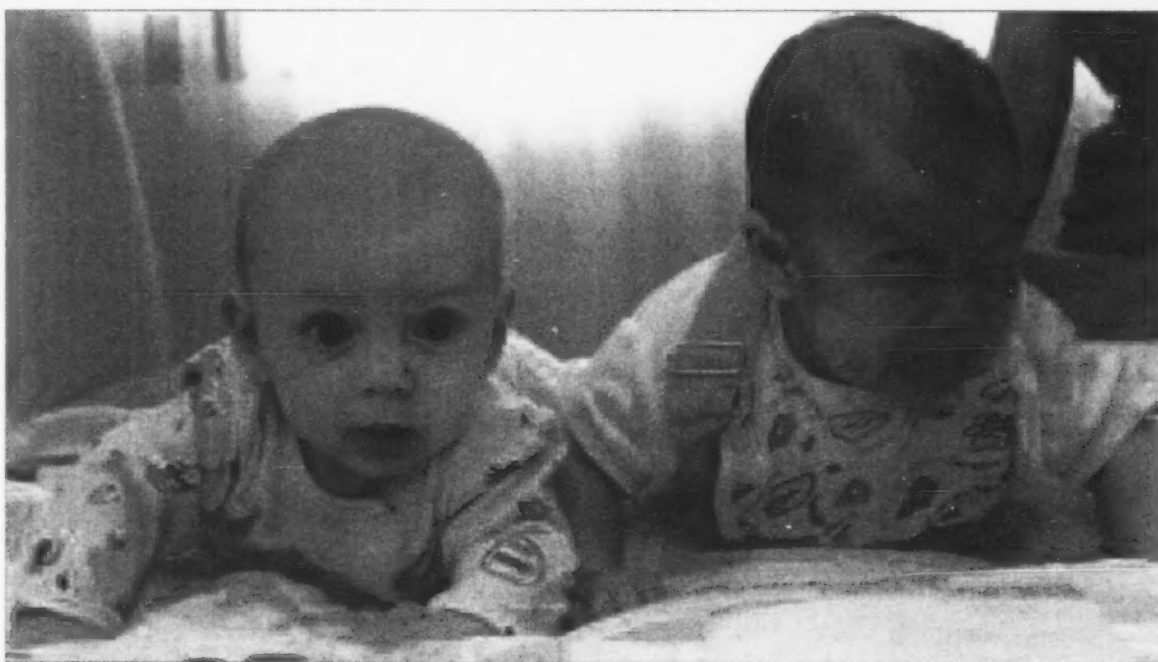
Developing new skills

Babies grow and develop at their own speed, step by step. Every baby develops in her own way.

Every day, your baby is learning new things and developing new skills. She's developing a

personality and becoming her own special self. Your baby will develop new skills bit by bit over the months. It doesn't happen all at once. Your baby needs time to learn.

In the end, most babies do just fine.



Your baby wants you to know...

By the time I'm about 6 weeks old, I'll have learned to smile at you! Smile back when I smile at you! Your smiles tell me you love me.



Growth and development

New skills to watch for

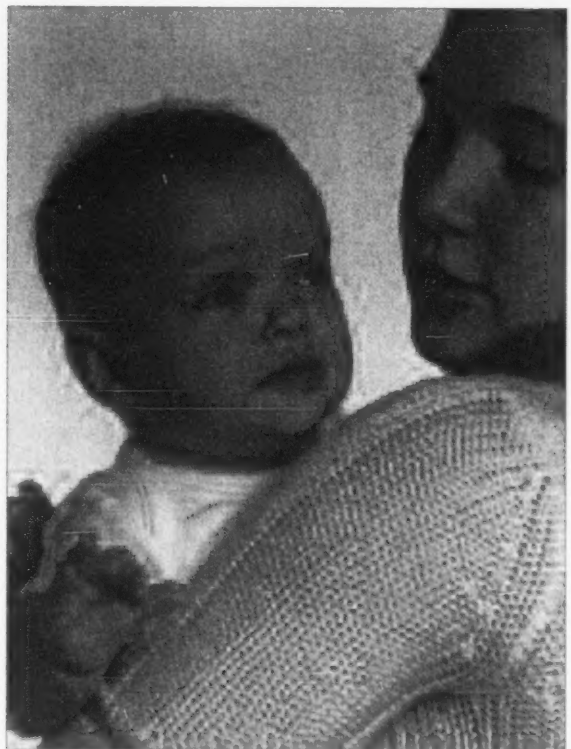
At 1 month, does your baby...

- Look at you?
- Lift his head for a few seconds when lying on his tummy?
- Notice sounds? Startle at loud noises?
- Blink at bright lights?



At 3 months, does your baby...

- Know your face?
- Smile when you smile?
- Follow objects with his eyes?
- Hold his head steady?
- Coo, gurgle, laugh, and squeal?
- Open and close his hands?
- Hold your finger?
- Kick his legs?



At 6 months, does your baby...

- Like to look at faces more than anything else?
- Smile when he hears your voice? When he sees someone he knows? When he's happy? When he wants to play with you? When he sees himself in a mirror?
- Make singsong noises and copy sounds?
- Turn his head to see where a sound is coming from?
- Make sounds while he's playing by himself?
- Love listening to music, rhythm, voices, and toys that make noise?
- Recognize voices he hears a lot? Look for you when he hears your voice? Notice when he hears a strange voice?
- Enjoy games like peek-a-boo?
- Push himself up on his arms when lying on his tummy?
- Pull himself to a sitting position if you hold his hands?
- Roll over—from front to back and back to front?
- Push down on his legs and support his weight when you hold him?
- Put his hands—and other things!—in his mouth?
- Reach for things with one or both hands?
- Grab and shake small toys?
- Pass things from one hand to the other?



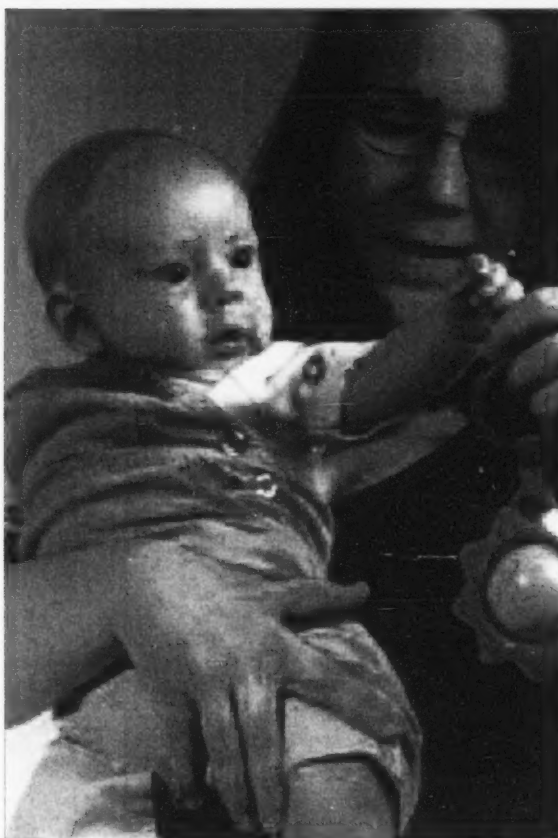
Growth and development

Helping your baby develop

You can help your baby develop by talking, reading, and singing to her, playing with her, and responding to her.

To help your baby develop her muscles:

- Hold toys so your baby will reach for them.
- Give her things to hold and feel.
- Give your baby lots of tummy time. (See page 28 to learn more about tummy time.)



To help your baby develop social skills:

- Respond to your baby. Smile back when she smiles at you. Go to her when she cries. Help her learn she can depend on you.
- Make faces for her to copy. Stick out your tongue. Puff out your cheeks. Wrinkle your nose. Let your baby try to copy you.
- Respect your baby's feelings. Some babies warm up to new people quickly. Others take more time. Let your baby get used to people in her own way.
- Give your baby new things to think about. Take her for walks outside. Talk to her about what she's seeing.



To help your baby develop hearing and speech:

- Give your baby lots of things to listen to. Sing to her. Talk to her. For example, tell her what you're doing while you work. Tell your baby what you're doing while you dress her, wash her, and change her diaper. Give her rattles to make noise with. Play music for her. Describe what you see when you're out walking.
- Copy the sounds your baby makes. Make sounds for her to copy.
- Play games with her that have songs or words—like patty-cake, peek-a-boo, or this little piggy.
- Read to your baby.



Your baby wants you to know...

Smile at me! I love to look at faces! Hold me close so I can see your smile. Give me bright colours, patterns, and shiny things to look at.

Talk to me! I like gentle voices and soft sounds. Read to me. I like music. I like to hear you sing and hum. I like to listen to soothing sounds, like the washing machine, dishwasher, vacuum cleaner, or stove fan. Sudden loud noises can scare me.

Cuddle me! I need to feel gentle touches and cuddles. Your touch tells me that you love me. It welcomes me to the world. You can't hold or cuddle me too much.

When to wonder about your baby's development

By 6 months, most babies have developed a set of basic skills. You should talk to your baby's health care provider if your baby:

- Does not roll over
- Does not push down with his legs when his feet are placed on a firm surface
- Has not started babbling
- Has not started smiling
- Does not turn his head toward sounds
- Cannot sit up, even with help
- Does not laugh or make squealing sounds
- Seems very stiff—like his muscles are tight
- Seems very floppy—like a rag doll
- Still holds his hands in fists and doesn't hold things
- Has crossed eyes most of the time

Added info...

If your baby is a preemie, remember that he may develop skills at different ages. Check with your health care provider to find out what's normal for your baby.





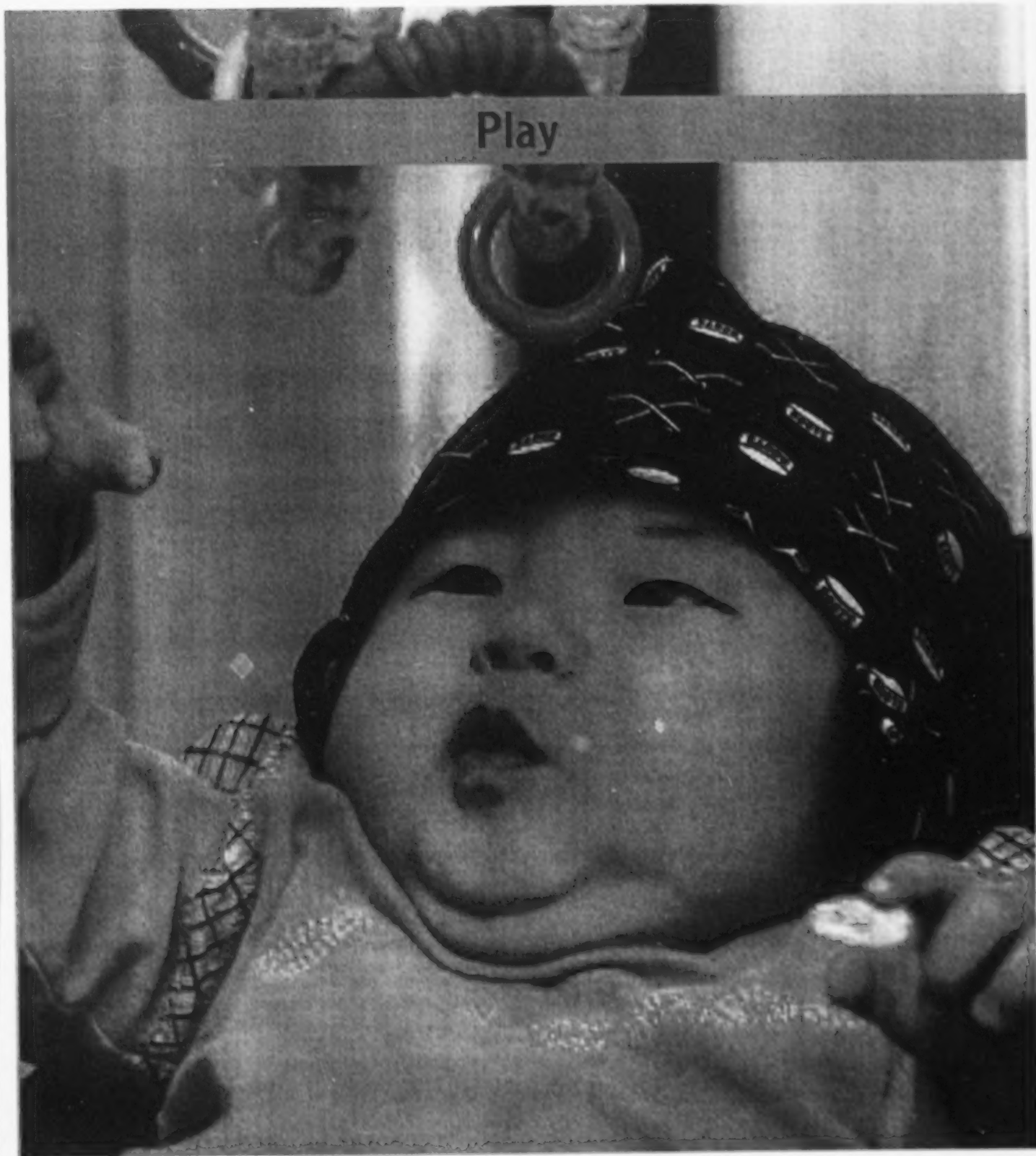
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Play



*I know that play is important for babies. But she's so small!
What can I do that she'll like and is safe?*

Games and activities

Play is how your baby learns. It helps her to develop the skills she needs to grow and learn.

When you spend time playing with your baby, you're showing her that you love her and that she's important to you. And it's fun for both of you!

Tummy Time—To build strong muscles

Tummy play gives your baby a break from lying on his back. It helps him learn to lift his head and to push up on his hands and arms.

- Lay on your back.
- Lay your baby on his tummy on top of your chest.
- Play with him. Talk to him so he'll lift his head to look at you.

OR

- Lay baby tummy down on a blanket on the floor.
- Lay on your tummy, facing him.
- Talk to him. Play with him.
- Show him toys so he'll lift his head to look. Put an unbreakable mirror nearby, so he can see himself when he looks down.
- Play music so he'll look to see where it's coming from.



Baby Massage—To teach baby about her body

While doing this, sing to your baby. Talk to her. Say the names of her body parts.

- Lay your baby on her back.
- Sit or kneel next to her.
- Gently stroke each of her arms, from top to bottom, all the way to her fingertips. Do this several times.
- Stroke each of her legs from top to bottom, all the way to her toes. Do this several times.
- Stroke the sides of her head from top to bottom. Go from the top of the forehead, around the cheeks, and under the chin.
- Rub her hands and feet between your hands.



Tracking—To help baby learn to follow things with his eyes

- Lay your baby on his back.
- Say his name until he looks at you.
- Hold something black and white about 20 cm (8 inches) from his face.
- Slowly move it from side to side. Go slowly so baby's eyes have time to follow.
- Give baby a rest. Smile, talk to him.
- Repeat the game a few more times.



Play

Copycat—To help baby learn by copying what you do

- Lay your baby on her back.
- Say her name until she looks at you.
- Bring your face close to hers—about 25 cm (10 inches) away.
- Slowly stick out your tongue. Wait a few seconds. Do it again.
- Give baby time to copy you.



Pull-ups—To help your baby use his muscles

Do this activity with your baby when he's old enough to hold up his head.

- Lay your baby on his back.
- Hold both his hands.
- Slowly pull up until baby is sitting.
- Talk to him while pulling. Say things like, "Up we go!" Do this several times.
- After a while, you'll find that your baby tries to do more of the work and you have to pull less.

Toys

Toys

Babies don't need a lot of expensive toys. They need:

- **Things to look at—**
colourful pictures, mobiles, books
- **Things to hold and chew on—**
teething toys, clean wet facecloth
- **Things that make noise—**
rattles, musical toys
- **Soft toys—**
to feel different textures

For a baby, a parent is the best toy in the world!

Your face and smile to look at...

Your voice to hear...

Your fingers to grab and hold...

Your warm body and arms to keep her safe while she learns about the world...

You are your baby's best toy!



Your baby wants you to know...

The best times to play with me or read to me are when I'm quiet, calm, and awake.

When I'm tired of playing, I'll look away or turn my head.

If I'm very tired, I'll cry.

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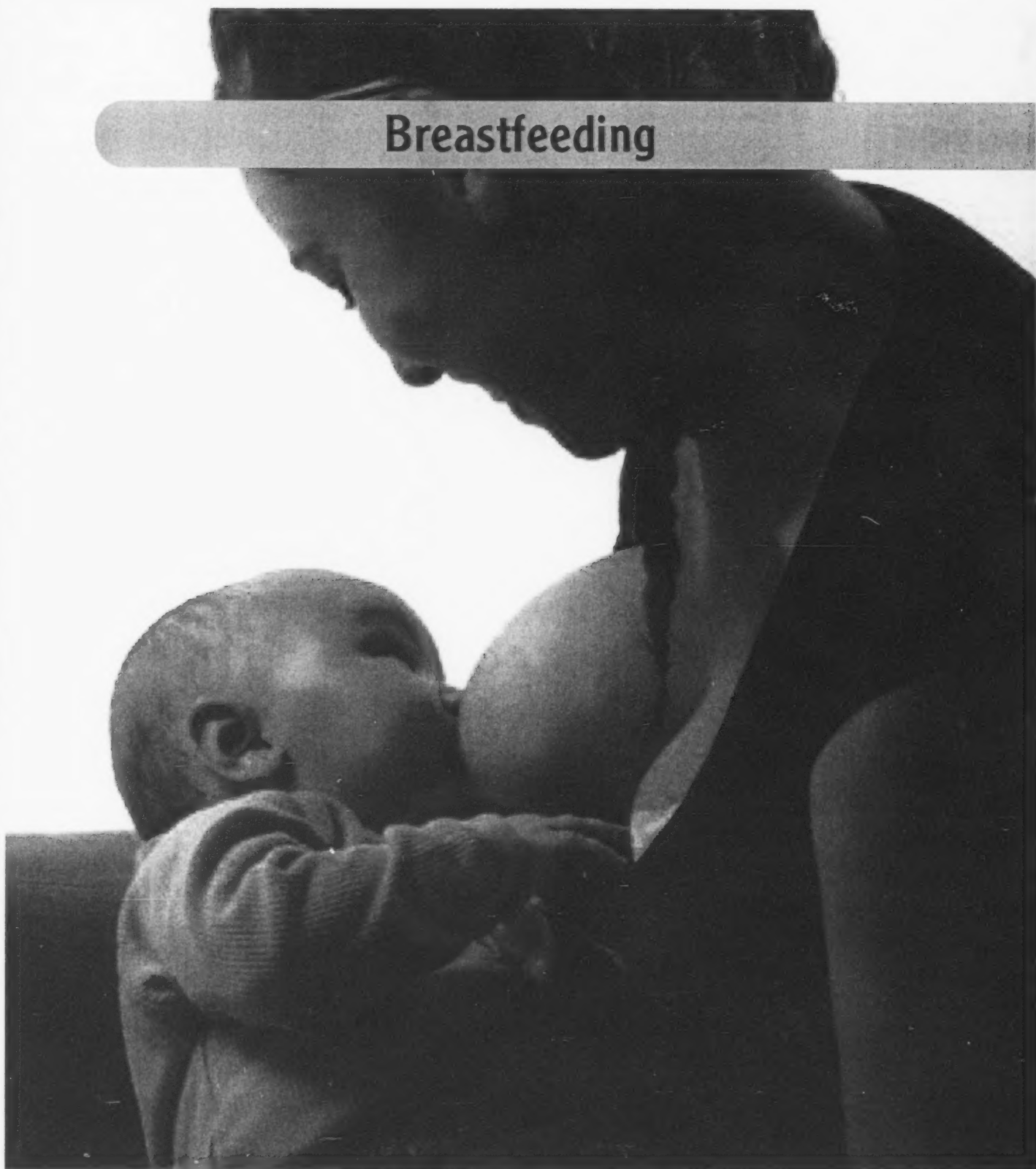
If you decide to feed your baby with infant formula, talk to your health care provider about infant formula and your baby's health. You'll find information about how to use infant formula as safely as possible in **How to Feed Your Baby with Infant Formula**.

You can get a copy from your local public health office. (Contact information, page 100)

You'll find more information about breastfeeding in **Breastfeeding Basics**.

You can get a copy from your local public health office. (Contact information, page 100)

Breastfeeding



Breastfeeding turned out to be the most amazing experience for me and for my family. I was a bit uncertain at first, but I'm glad that I did it.

The best start

Breastfeeding gives your baby the healthiest possible start! It's the best food for your baby.

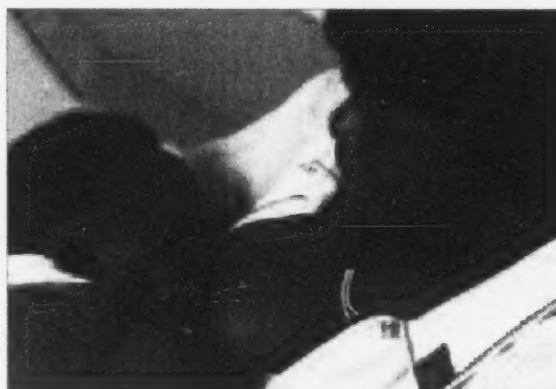
Breast milk is the only food babies need until they're 6 months old. If your baby gets any other food or drink—including infant formula—you will

make less breast milk. This means that your baby will get less breast milk and will not get all the benefits that breastfeeding offers.

Breastfeeding has lots of benefits—for babies, mothers, families, and communities.

Breastfeeding benefits babies

- Human milk is the perfect food for human babies.
- It keeps them healthy by protecting them from ear infections, allergies, diarrhea, vomiting, and anemia (low iron).
- It helps their brain develop. Breast milk contains exactly the right mix of the nutrients that babies need for their brain to develop.
- It lowers the risk that babies will develop childhood leukemia, type 1 and 2 diabetes, respiratory infections, and SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).
- Babies are less likely to come into contact with germs because breast milk is always clean.
- Babies can be fed right away when they're hungry, because breast milk is always ready
- Babies are less likely to be burned, because breast milk is always the right temperature.



Added info...

Breastfed babies need Vitamin D drops.

Contact your local public health office for more information about this.
(Contact information, page 100)

Breastfeeding benefits mothers

- Breastfeeding helps your uterus return to its pre-pregnancy size more quickly.
- It uses up the fat your body stored during pregnancy.
- It releases a hormone that makes you feel good!
- It makes it less likely that you will develop breast cancer, ovarian cancer, or osteoporosis.
- Breast milk is ready and waiting all the time. You do not have to purchase, measure, and mix formula. You don't have to warm bottles during the night. You can meet your baby's need right away.



Breastfeeding benefits families and communities:

- Breastfeeding saves money. You don't need to buy formula, bottles, and equipment. Breast milk requires no preparation. There's no need to use electricity and hot water.
- Breastfeeding protects the environment. Breast milk doesn't need packaging. Producing it doesn't harm the environment.
- Breastfeeding reduces health care costs. Breastfed babies are sick less. They need fewer visits to health care providers and hospitals.
- Breastfeeding reduces the number of sick days that families must use to care for their sick children.

Added info...

You and your baby will both be healthier if you don't smoke or use alcohol or other drugs while you are breastfeeding.

However, even if you smoke, breastfeeding is still the best way to feed your baby.

You can find more information on the effects of smoking, alcohol, and other drugs on breastfeeding in **Breastfeeding Basics**. You can get a copy from your local public health office. (Contact information, page 100)

Breastfeeding

Connecting with your baby

Feeding your baby is a special time. It's a time to cuddle, enjoy, and connect with your baby.

When you breastfeed your baby:

- Hold him close. Babies love to be held skin-to-skin. Babies latch on and breastfeed better when they're often snuggled skin-to-skin.
- Look into his eyes.
- Smile, talk, and sing to him.

Other family members can share in breastfeeding, too.

Feeding times are a good time for brothers and sisters to connect with their new baby. They can sit with you and have a snack. They can talk or sing to the baby. You can tell everyone a story.

Support from fathers and partners helps mothers to breastfeed happily and successfully. By bringing the baby to Mom for breastfeeding, or by bringing Mom food, drinks, and pillows, fathers and partners can connect with both Mom and baby. Their encouragement, praise, and pride in giving their baby the best start in life can get mothers through times when they are tired and wonder if breastfeeding is worth it.

When you feed your baby, you do more than nourish his body. You are making connections that will last a lifetime.

Added info...

There are many ways that fathers and partners can connect with their baby.

- Skin-to-skin cuddling after breastfeeding
- Holding, rocking, cuddling, massaging, and playing
- Changing, burping, and bathing

There are many ways to build a loving connection with your baby!



Your baby wants you to know...

Hold me close when you feed me. Look into my eyes and tell me you love me.

Breastfeeding to comfort your baby

Breastfeeding does more than make your baby's body strong. Your breast gives your baby comfort as well as food. You can breastfeed your baby when she's lonely, tired, or scared—not just when she's hungry.

Being held close to breastfeed helps a baby feel safe and loved. You aren't spoiling your baby by breastfeeding her when she needs comfort and closeness.

Added info...

To get your baby off to a good start with breastfeeding, it's best not to use a soother until about 6 weeks. By this time, your baby will be breastfeeding well.



Your baby wants you to know...

When you breastfeed me, your love nourishes me too.

Babies need to feed often

Babies come in different weights and lengths, but all babies have very tiny tummies!

Babies' tummies can't hold much at one time, so they need to be fed often—day and night.

Every baby has his own way of breastfeeding. Most newborn babies need to feed every 1 to 3 hours. Some babies need to feed many times during the night. Others may not need to feed as often. Follow your baby's cues. You'll soon learn what's normal for him.

Added info...

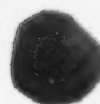
Your baby has many ways to tell you he's hungry. Some feeding cues are:

- Holding hands or fists over his chest
- Sucking on his fingers or fist
- Turning toward your body with an open mouth
- Smacking his lips
- Sticking out his tongue
- Making sucking sounds
- Crying

Your baby wants you to know...

Come when I call! Crying is only one of the ways I can let you know I'm hungry. When you come as soon as I start to cry, you help me learn that I can trust you to come when I need you.

When I cry, I need you to come quickly. If you wait too long, I worry that you won't come. I cry so hard you'll have to calm me down before I can breastfeed.



A newborn baby's tummy is the size of a chickpea.



A week-old baby's tummy is the size of a cherry.



By 3 or 4 weeks, a baby's tummy is the size of a walnut.

How to tell if your baby is breastfeeding well

You know your baby is breastfeeding well when:

- You can hear her swallowing while she's feeding.
- She's content after breastfeeding.
- She has wet or dirty diapers each day.
As your baby's tummy gets bigger, she'll have more wet diapers. On the first day, she might have 1. Then, each day of the first week, she'll have a few more. After the first week, she should have between 6 and 10 wet or dirty diapers each day.
- She's growing and gaining weight.

Added info...

There may be a good reason why babies want to breastfeed during the night! Nighttime feedings increase your milk supply. You make more milk at night because that's when the hormones that help you make breast milk are at their highest levels.



Breastfeeding

Weight gain and growth

It's normal for babies to lose a little weight in the first few days after they're born. By 2 to 3 weeks, most babies have gained that back and weigh the same as they did at birth.

From birth to 3 months, most babies gain about 1 kilogram (2 pounds) a month.

From 4 to 6 months, most babies gain about 500 grams (1 pound) a month.

By age 6 months, most babies will weigh about twice as much as they did at birth.

As well as gaining weight, your baby is also growing longer. You may notice her outgrowing her newborn size sleepers!

Remember that every baby grows at her own pace. Talk to your health care provider if you have any concerns about how your baby is growing.



Growth spurts

Babies have times when they grow very fast. For most babies, these growth spurts happen at around 10 days, 3 weeks, 6 weeks, 3 months, and 6 months.

Growth spurts usually last for only a few days.

During a growth spurt, babies usually want to breastfeed more often or for longer at each feeding. Follow your baby's cues. He'll let you know when he's hungry and how much he needs.

By feeding your baby whenever he's hungry, you will make enough milk to meet your baby's needs. Your milk will give him the nourishment he needs to grow. At this age he does not need solid foods.



Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding anytime, anywhere

You have the right to breastfeed your baby anytime, anywhere. In Nova Scotia, both the law and government policy protect this right. No one can legally ask you to leave a public place because you're breastfeeding.

Other mothers are a good source of ideas for ways to breastfeed in public. Look for La Leche League meetings or breastfeeding support groups in your community. If you have friends who have breastfed their babies, talk to them.

You can also get information about how to continue breastfeeding when you return to work or school from your local public health office. (Contact information, page 100)

Everyone has a part to play in making our communities welcoming to breastfeeding families.

Added info...

You will see moms and babies breastfeeding in many places in your community. There are many options for breastfeeding in public. Do whatever feels comfortable to you.

- You can wear clothes that lift up from the waist.
- You can drape a blanket or towel around you and your baby.
- You can use a cloth baby sling that will cover the baby while breastfeeding.
- You can turn your body away from other people while your baby latches on.

Look for breastfeeding rooms in malls, airports, and other public spaces.



*I have many questions about breastfeeding! Who can I talk to?
Who will listen?*

Support is important when you breastfeed

Every mother and baby learn to breastfeed together. For some, it comes easily. Others have more questions or concerns. Parents often enjoy sharing their stories, experiences, and feelings about breastfeeding with other parents.

Other mothers who are breastfeeding—or who have breastfed—are one of the best sources of support, information, and someone to talk with. You can meet other breastfeeding mothers in your community through:

- Family resource centres
- Classes and support groups offered by Public Health Services

- La Leche League
(Contact information for these organizations, page 100,101)

You can get information about breastfeeding from:

- Health care providers and public health
- Books and videos from your local library
- Websites like:
www.infactcanada.ca
www.lalecheleaguecanada.ca



Breastfeeding

When will my baby be ready for solid food? My mother says that she gave me cereal when I was just a couple of months old. She says it will help my baby sleep through the night. Is that true?

It's too soon for solid food

Parents often feel pressure to give their baby solid food. Babies shouldn't get solid food before 6 months.

Until they're 6 months old, the nourishment babies get from breast milk is more important to their growth and development than anything they could get from solid food.

When you give your baby solid food too soon, it fills her tummy. It makes her too full to drink much breast milk. This means that you will make less and your baby will not get enough breast milk to give her the nourishment that she needs.

Before 6 months, babies' bodies aren't ready to handle solid food. It can upset their tummy or cause diarrhea or constipation.

You'll know your baby is ready for solid foods when she's 6 months old and can:

- Sit up with only a little help
- Hold her head up
- Show you when she doesn't want food
For example, she can turn her face away
- Open her mouth for a spoon
- Move her tongue back so she can swallow



Added info...

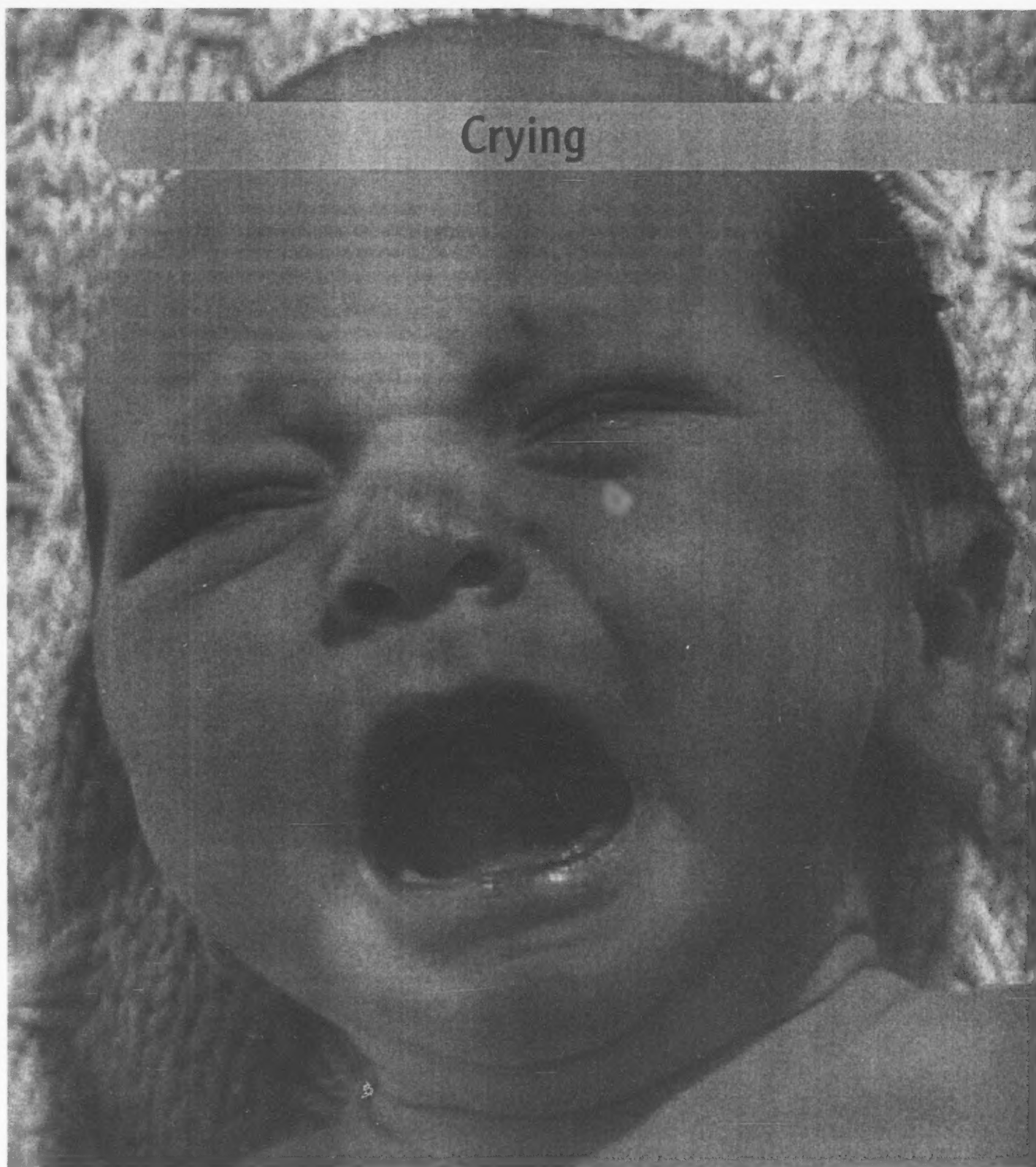
Giving your baby solid food will not help him sleep through the night.

Giving a baby solid food early does not mean he is more mature or is developing faster than other babies.

Breastfeeding

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Crying



What should I do when my baby cries? Will I spoil her if I pick her up as soon as she cries?

Why babies cry

Most of the time, babies cry because they need something. They don't cry to upset you or bother you. You cannot spoil your baby by going to him every time he cries.

Your baby needs to know that he can depend on you to be there when he needs you. When you answer his cries with loving care you are teaching him that he can trust you.

Most healthy babies cry between 1 and 3 hours a day. Babies start to cry a little less after about 3 months. They don't do all their crying at once, though. It's spread out over the day and night.

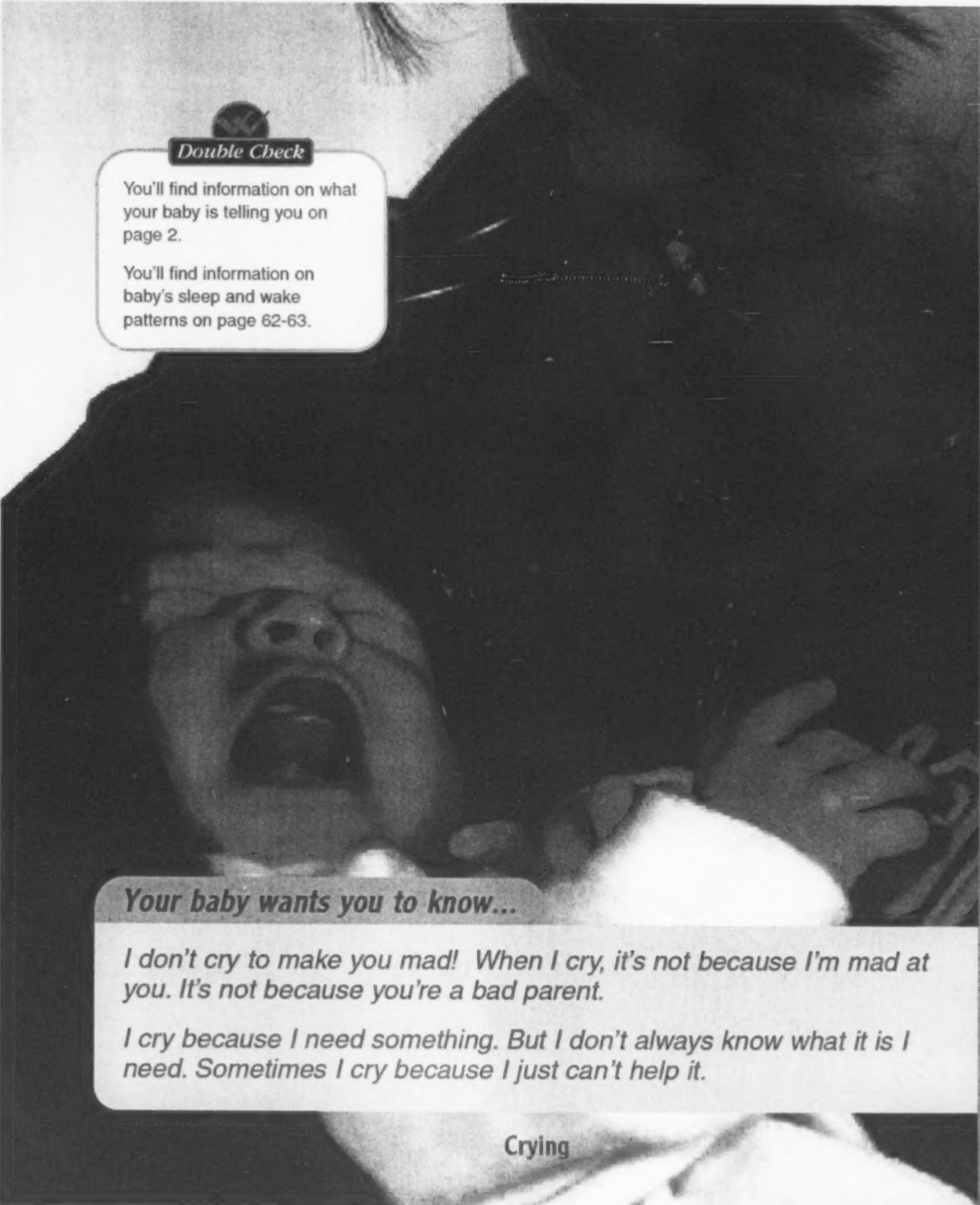
If your baby cries for more than 4 to 5 hours a day, talk to your health care provider.

Watch your baby closely. Pay attention to his sleep patterns and to what he is telling you. As you get to know him, you'll get better at understanding and meeting his needs. Trust your instincts. You know your baby best. Most of the time, you'll probably be able to figure out why he's crying and what he needs. Sometimes, you won't be able to figure out why your baby is crying. When this happens, all you can do is keep trying to comfort him.

Added info...

Letting your baby cry does NOT develop his lungs!





Double Check

You'll find information on what your baby is telling you on page 2.

You'll find information on baby's sleep and wake patterns on page 62-63.

Your baby wants you to know...

I don't cry to make you mad! When I cry, it's not because I'm mad at you. It's not because you're a bad parent.

I cry because I need something. But I don't always know what it is I need. Sometimes I cry because I just can't help it.

Crying

How to comfort a crying baby

Nobody's calm all the time, but the calmer you are, the calmer your baby will be. When you go to your baby, take a deep breath, make an effort to calm down, and smile.

.....

- **Go to your baby as soon as she starts to cry.** You can't spoil your baby by picking her up when she cries. When you come quickly, it helps both you and your baby. Babies cry less when someone comes as soon as they start to cry.
- **Try to figure out what your baby needs.** Look for what your baby is telling you. Is she hungry? Wet? Too warm? Cold? Sick? Is she lonely? Tired? Bored? Upset? Too excited? Maybe it's just your baby's fussy time of day.
- **Offer comfort and loving care.** If your baby isn't hungry and doesn't need a diaper change, try different things until you find what she needs. For example:
 - Cuddle her close.
 - Hold her against your shoulder.
 - Rub her back.
 - Move her around. Try walking or gentle rocking. Take her out for a walk in the stroller. Take her for a drive.
- **Try a baby carrier.** Some babies need a lot of close contact with a parent. Try carrying your baby next to your body in a cloth baby carrier or sling. Try carrying your baby next to your skin.
- **Try soothing with sound.** Hum or sing. Make soft shushing sounds—"shhh, shhh." Play soft music. Some babies like the sound of the clothes dryer, washing machine, vacuum cleaner, running shower, or dishwasher. Make a tape or a CD of a sound your baby likes and play it when she cries.
- **Move your baby to a different room.** If there's a lot of noise or activity going on, your baby might be too excited. Try moving to a quieter room. If your baby is in a quiet place, she might be bored. Try moving her to a place where there's more activity.
- **Give your baby something to suck.** Most babies like to suck on their fingers or fist.

Added info...

To see if your baby is too warm, touch the back of her neck. If it's damp, she's too hot.

Added info...

You can get help and information about how to handle your baby's crying from your local public health office. (Contact information, page 100)

Crying

Crying and colic

A baby with colic cries for hours at a time every day, often in the evening. Your baby may scream as if he's in pain. He might pull his knees up toward his chest. He keeps crying no matter how many things you try.

If your baby is going to have colic, it usually starts when he's a few weeks old. It will usually stop by 3 months.

Colic is more than just a baby being fussy. It's a medical condition. No one knows what causes

colic. No one knows why some babies have it and others don't. It is not the result of anything you did or didn't do. Talk to your health care provider if you think your baby might have colic.

Colic is hard for both babies and parents. It can be very difficult to stay calm when your baby keeps crying. It's important to keep trying to comfort your baby. He may not be able to show it, but he needs to know you're there.



Your baby wants you to know...

When I'm crying, I need your loving care the most. Even when it seems like I'll never stop crying, I still need you to comfort me. When you help me through this difficult time, it makes the bonds between us stronger.

Comfort for parents

You may need help from friends and family to get through this difficult time.

If you have someone with you, take turns when your baby cries. One of you can go outside or to another room for some quiet or some exercise, while the other comforts the baby.

If you are on your own, call someone you trust for help when you need a break.

Double Check

You'll find information about how to handle stress and anger in **LOVING CARE: Parents and Families**.



Crying

Colic comfort

Often, a baby with colic can't calm down, no matter how many things you try. But even if she keeps crying, your baby might feel better if you try some of these things:

- Hold your baby over your arm. Lay your baby with her belly on your forearm and her head in the bend of your elbow. Hold her with her back against the front of your body. Let her arms and legs hang down.
- Lay your baby with her belly on your forearm, with your hand supporting her head. Let her arms and legs hang down. Rub or pat her back.



- Carry your baby next to your chest in a cloth baby carrier or sling. Walk, dance, or move around.
- Take your baby for a walk or a drive.
- Give your baby a warm bath.
- Hold your baby with her back against the front of your body. Support her bum with one hand. Wrap your other arm under her legs, so that her knees are bent and she's curled up against you.



Added info...

Some colicky babies find massage very comforting. You can find some basic information on this on page 29 of this book.

Some Family Resource Centres offer infant massage training sessions. Check to see what's available near you. (Contact information, page 101)

- Hold your baby skin-to-skin on your stomach or chest.



Crying

Sometimes my baby just cries and cries. Nothing seems to help! I get so upset and angry. I don't know what to do!

When your baby keeps crying

Sometimes your baby cries and cries no matter how many things you try. This can be very difficult for parents. You can feel helpless, frustrated, angry, and alone.

You may even feel so desperate that you're afraid you might hurt your baby.

If you start to feel out of control:

- Gently lay your baby in his crib, leave the room, and close the door.
- Give yourself 10 to 15 minutes to calm down.
- Go back to your baby and try again to comfort him.
- If you start to lose control again, put him down and leave again.
- Call someone you trust—a friend, neighbour, or family member.

Keep returning to comfort your baby every 10 to 15 minutes. Even when he can't stop crying, he still needs to know you're there. He still needs to know you love him.

All parents need help sometimes. Try to find someone to help you—like a trusted friend or relative who can come on short notice when you need a break. Keep their phone number handy for the times when you need support. Talking to other parents can also be a source of information and support.



Never shake your baby

Your baby has a heavy head and a weak neck. If you shake her, her head will jerk back and forth. Her brain will be damaged and will bleed. Her spine can be injured. Your baby could die.

No matter how upset or angry you feel, never, ever shake your baby!

CAUTION!

Babies can be injured by caregivers or other family members. Be sure everyone who takes care of your baby knows that they should **NEVER SHAKE A BABY.**

Double Check

You'll find information about how to handle stress and anger in **LOVING CARE: Parents and Families.**



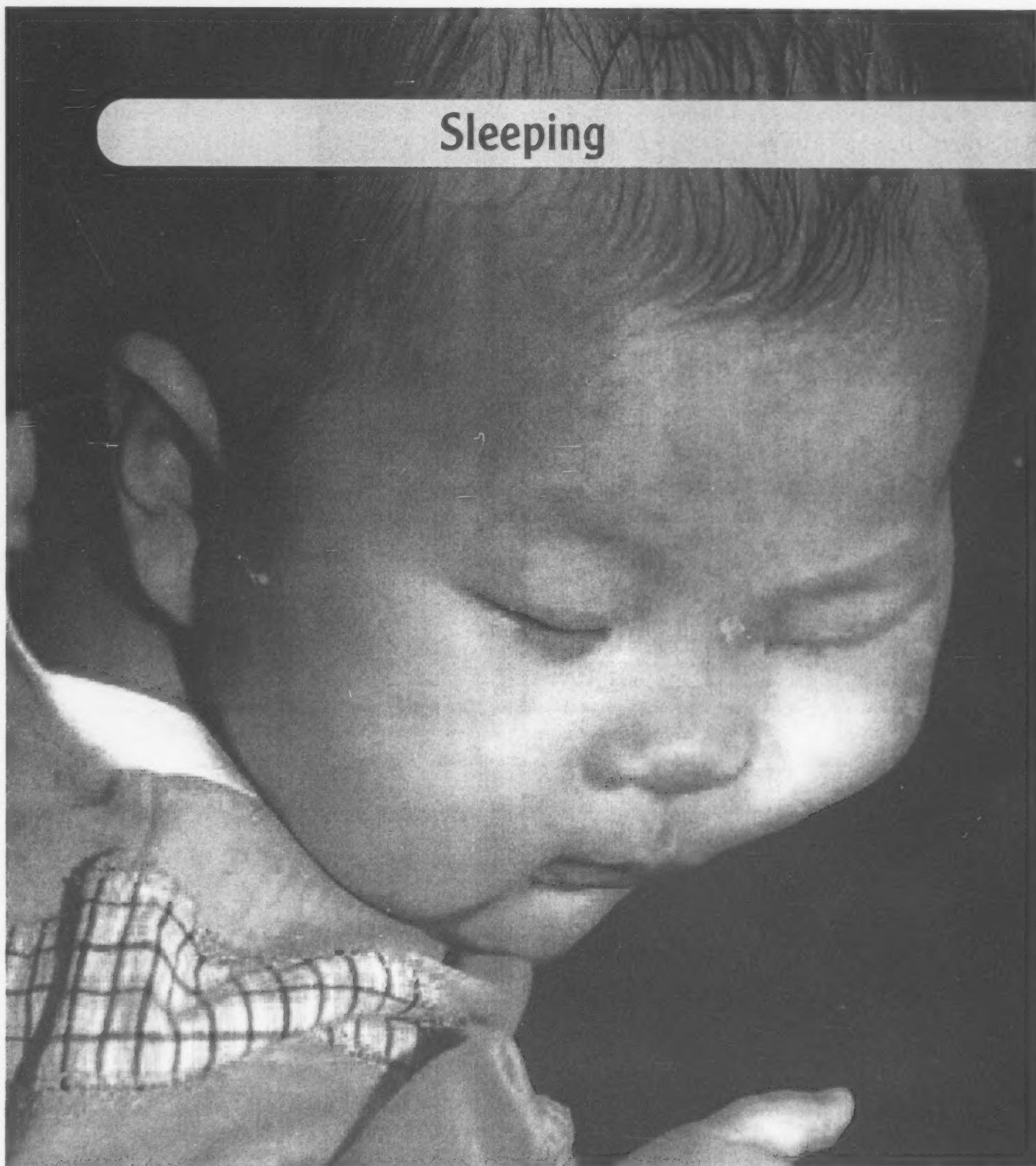
Your baby wants you to know...

Shaking can kill me. It can hurt my brain or spine in ways that can never be healed.

Crying

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Sleeping



How much should a baby sleep? It seems like mine just gets to sleep and then he's awake again!

How much do babies sleep?

Babies sleep more than you might think. A newborn sleeps between 12 and 17 hours a day.

This can be hard to believe because babies don't often sleep for more than a few hours at a time. In fact, a new baby should not have more than one long sleep of about 4 to 5 hours in a 24-hour day. This is because babies' tummies are very small. They need to be fed every few hours, day and night.

Over the first weeks and months of your baby's life, you'll start to see a pattern to when your baby is awake and when he needs to sleep. Watch what your baby is telling you. Put him on his back in his crib when he shows you he's tired. This will help him learn to connect sleeping with his crib.

As your baby grows, he'll slowly spend less time sleeping.

- At 1 month, most babies sleep about 15 and a half hours a day.
- At 3 months, they sleep about 15 hours a day.
- At 6 months, they sleep about 14 hours a day.

During the day, babies sleep in short naps. At night, they sleep for longer periods, but will still wake up to be fed.

By the time they're about 4 months old, most babies start to be awake more during the day

and to sleep a bit more during the night. Most babies like 2 or 3 naps during the day—1 nap in the morning and another 1 or 2 naps in the afternoon.

Between 3 and 6 months, some babies start to sleep through the night once in a while. This means that they sleep for about 5 hours without waking up to feed. This doesn't mean that your baby will sleep through every night. But slowly, over time, he'll sleep through more and more often.



Added info...

Some babies are very sensitive to being handled. They get upset when they get too much attention from too many people at once. This can happen at parties, social events, or when you have visitors.

When your baby gets wound up like this, he'll need some quiet time before he can calm down and go to sleep.

Your baby wants you to know...

When I wake up at night:

Come as soon as I start to cry. It's easier for me to go back to sleep if I stay calm.

Keep the room dim. Bright lights can wake me up.

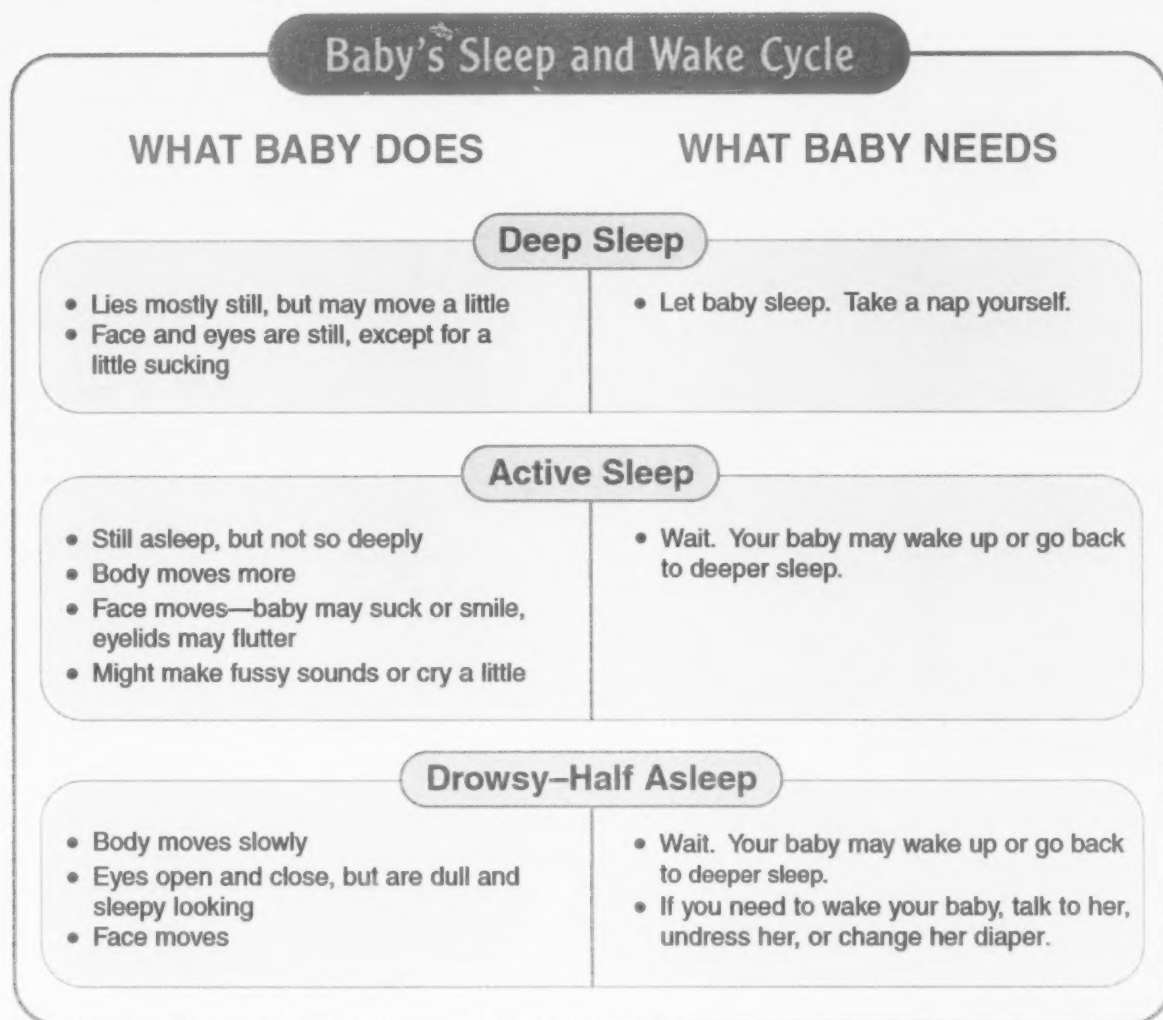
Keep things quiet. Hum or talk softly to me.

Sleeping

Your baby's sleep and wake cycle

Every baby has her own pattern of sleeping and waking. She moves through this cycle several times over the course of a day and night. What your baby needs can depend on where she is in her journey from sleeping to being awake.

Watch closely and you'll learn where your baby is in her sleep cycle. When you know this, it's easier to figure out what she needs.



Your baby's sleep and wake cycle

Baby's Sleep and Wake Cycle

WHAT BABY DOES

WHAT BABY NEEDS

Awake and Alert

- More body movement
- Bright, open eyes
- Bright, alert face
- Interested in what's going on around her

- This is the best time to feed your baby.
- This is a good time to play or talk to your baby. When your baby looks away, she's telling you she needs a rest.
- Give your baby something to look at or listen to.

Awake and Active

- Lots of movement of arms and legs
- Fussy
- Eyes wide open
- Bothered by noises
- May be hungry

- If you're playing with baby, stop and let her rest. Try another activity.
- See if she wants to suck on her fist or fingers.

Awake and Crying

- Cries
- Makes faces

- If you are playing with your baby, stop. She's had enough.
- Comfort your baby. (See page 50 for information on how to comfort a crying baby.)
- Be patient.

Sleeping

Helping your baby fall asleep

All babies are different. Some sleep more than others. Some sleep less. Some fall asleep easily and stay asleep. Others find it hard to get to sleep and wake up at the least little noise. This is not something you can change. It's just the way your baby is.

If your baby has problems going to sleep, be patient. Help him to get the sleep he needs by:

- Having bedtime and naptime routines
- Going to bed and having naps at the same time every day
- Waking him up at the same time every morning
- Helping him put himself to sleep

Parents can feel very frustrated if their baby falls asleep in their arms or while feeding, but then wakes up the minute they try to lay him in the crib. Or if their baby just doesn't want to go to sleep. The table on the next 2 pages lists some reasons why this might be happening and some things you can try if it does.



Double Check

See page 68 for more information on bedtime routines.

Causes of sleep problems

POSSIBLE PROBLEM

WHAT PARENTS HAVE TRIED

Temperature Change

Your baby has been warm and snug in your arms. The cold sheets in the crib can be enough to shock him awake.

- Lay your baby on a warm blanket. You can warm the blanket by sitting on it while feeding your baby. Or you can wrap your baby in a blanket while feeding, and then lay him on it in his crib.

Loneliness

Your baby feels better knowing you're near.

- Pat your baby's tummy when you lay him down. Slowly make your pats lighter until you can move your hand away without waking baby up.

Noise

Normal family noises keep some babies awake.

- Use a soothing sound to cover other noises. This can be a fan, or a tape or CD of some other noise your baby likes—like a dishwasher, a vacuum cleaner, or a dryer.
- When your baby wakes in the night, keep things quiet. Use a calm voice and soft, soothing sounds—like "shhh."

Causes of sleep problems

POSSIBLE PROBLEM

WHAT PARENTS HAVE TRIED

Light

Too much light can keep some babies awake.

Help your baby learn the difference between day and night.

- During the day, give him lots of light—especially outdoor light—but keep him out of direct sunlight. Talk to and play with your baby during the day. At night, keep the room he sleeps in dark and quiet.
- Try dimming the light during your bedtime routine. Talk and play quietly to your baby in the evening and the night. Save the active fun and games for daytime.

Too Tired or Excited

If your baby has had a busy day or missed some naps, he may be too tired and wound up to sleep.

- Try to stop this problem before it starts. Pay attention to the ways your baby tells you he's sleepy. Some babies get quiet. Some get fussy. Some yawn or blink their eyes. Put him down to sleep before he gets too tired. Try to organize the day so he gets regular naps. This will help keep him from getting too tired.
- If your baby is too wound up to relax and sleep, you can try soothing him by cuddling, walking him in a carrier, rocking, or doing anything else you know calms your baby down.

Helping your baby put herself to sleep

Little babies often fall asleep in a parent's arms. But sooner or later, all babies put themselves to sleep. For some babies, this happens at an early age. For some, it can take up until they're about 3 years old.

There is no hurry for your baby to learn to go to sleep by herself. Some parents find that if they start laying a sleepy baby in her crib once in a while, it helps her get used to falling asleep in the crib.

When you do this, you can make it easier for your baby by gently rubbing her tummy until she's nearly asleep. This lets her know you're still there.

Do what feels right to you. What works for every family will be different.



Your baby wants you to know...

*I need to sleep, even when it seems like I don't **want** to sleep. I need your love, care and patience to help me get the sleep I need.*

Bedtime routines

By the time your baby is 3 to 5 months old, he may be ready for a bedtime routine. This means doing the same things at the same time every night. This will help your baby calm down and ease into sleep.

A bedtime routine should be very quiet and gentle. It should also suit your baby. For example, a common bedtime routine for a baby is a bath, a story or song, a feeding with a cuddle, and then bed. But if a bath makes your baby excited and eager to play, it won't work as part of a soothing bedtime routine. You'll need to use something that soothes and quiets him instead.

Added info...

It's never too soon to start reading to your baby. Reading a story as part of a bedtime routine is a good way to start your baby on a lifetime of reading.

You'll find contact information for the "Read to Me" Program in the back of this book.



Reducing the risk of SIDS

SIDS—Sudden Infant Death Syndrome or Crib Death—is the sudden death of a baby who seemed perfectly healthy. SIDS is the most common cause of death in babies' first year of life. SIDS usually happens while the baby is sleeping.

No one knows what causes SIDS. No one knows how to prevent it.

But we do know that there are things parents can do to make SIDS less likely. Since parents started following these suggestions, the number of babies dying from SIDS in Canada has been cut almost in half.

SIDS is LESS LIKELY to happen when:

- Babies sleep on their back.
- Babies live in a smoke-free home.
- Babies are breastfed.
- Babies are not too hot.
- The crib has a firm mattress. There should be no pillows, comforters, stuffed toys, or bumper pads in cribs. If your baby needs a blanket, a knitted or crocheted blanket is a good choice.

Safe places to sleep

The safest place for all babies to sleep for the first 6 months is in a crib or bassinet within arm's reach of your bed. To lower the risk of SIDS, your baby should sleep on her back.

Many breastfeeding mothers bring their baby into bed with them to feed and sleep. To make this as safe as possible for baby, be sure that:

- Your mattress is firm. No waterbeds, soft mattresses, or cushions.
- Your partner knows the baby is in the bed.
- Your baby can't fall out of bed or get stuck between the mattress and the wall. She can't get trapped under the sheets, blankets, or pillows.
- Your baby sleeps on her back when she's finished feeding.

It is **NOT SAFE** to bring your baby into bed with you if you (or any other person in the bed) are a smoker—even if you never smoke in bed. It is also **NOT SAFE** if there is any reason that you might find it hard to respond to your baby. This could be because you or any other person in the bed:

- Are so tired that you might have trouble waking up when your baby cries.
- Have an illness or condition that could affect your ability to respond to your baby.
- Have taken medicine that could make you very sleepy.
- Have had alcohol or other drugs.

CAUTION!

It is never safe:

- To sleep with your baby on a sofa or armchair.
- For pets to sleep with your baby.

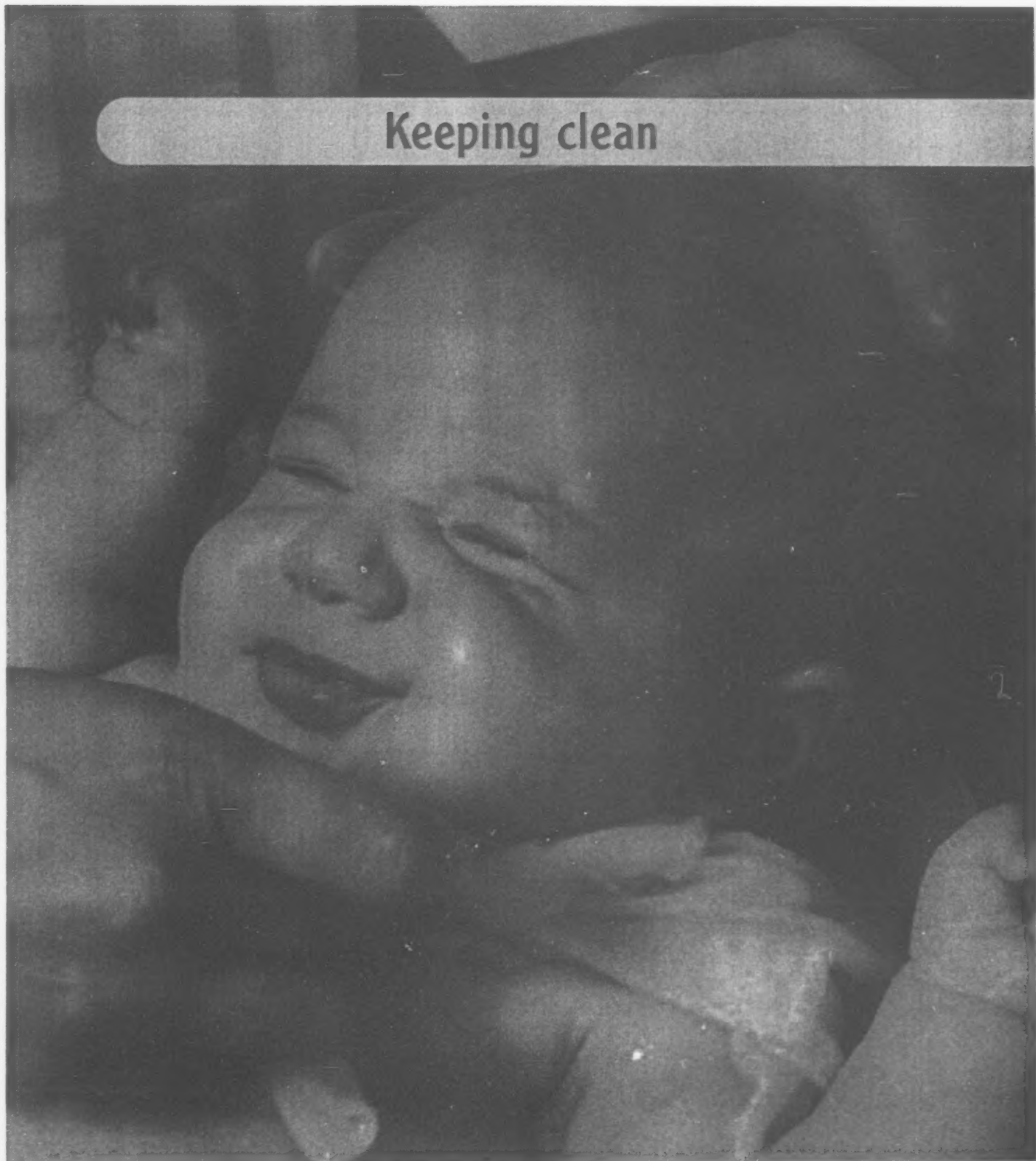




Sleeping

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Keeping clean



How clean do babies need to be? Should I give mine a bath everyday? What should I do about the cord?

Cord care

Your baby's cord can take anywhere from a week to several weeks to dry up and fall off. It's normal to have a little bleeding when this happens.

Don't worry if the cord gets wet while you're changing a diaper or bathing the baby. Just gently dry it off.

Until the cord falls off, turn the top of the diaper back to let the air dry the cord. You don't need to do anything else to it.

CAUTION!

Call the doctor if:

- The area around the cord is red or swells up
- It's leaking pus or fluid



Diapers

A healthy newborn has about 6 to 10 wet or dirty diapers over the day and night. Babies between ages 6 weeks and 6 months usually have 6 to 8 wet or dirty diapers per day.

Check with your health care provider if your baby has fewer than 6 wet diapers a day.

A dry bottom will keep your baby comfortable. Change your baby's diaper as soon as it gets wet or dirty.

Wash and dry the diaper area carefully every time you change the diaper.

- For girl babies, wash from front to back. Be sure all the creases are clean.
- For boy babies, don't pull back the foreskin when you wash the penis.

Added info...

You don't need to use baby powder or cornstarch.

If you choose to use baby powder, make sure the baby doesn't breathe it in.

Added info...

Washing your hands after you change your baby's diaper stops the spread of germs. This helps keep the whole family healthy.



Your baby wants you to know...

I like to play while I'm getting my diaper changed. Kiss my fingers, toes and belly. Talk to me. Sing to me. Tell me the names of my body parts.

Keeping clean

Diaper rash

Diaper rash is very common. All babies get a red or sore bottom once in a while. You can try to prevent diaper rash by:

- Changing your baby's diaper often.
- Washing the diaper area with a clean wash cloth whenever you change a diaper. Dry the area well.
- Leaving your baby's bottom bare as often as possible.

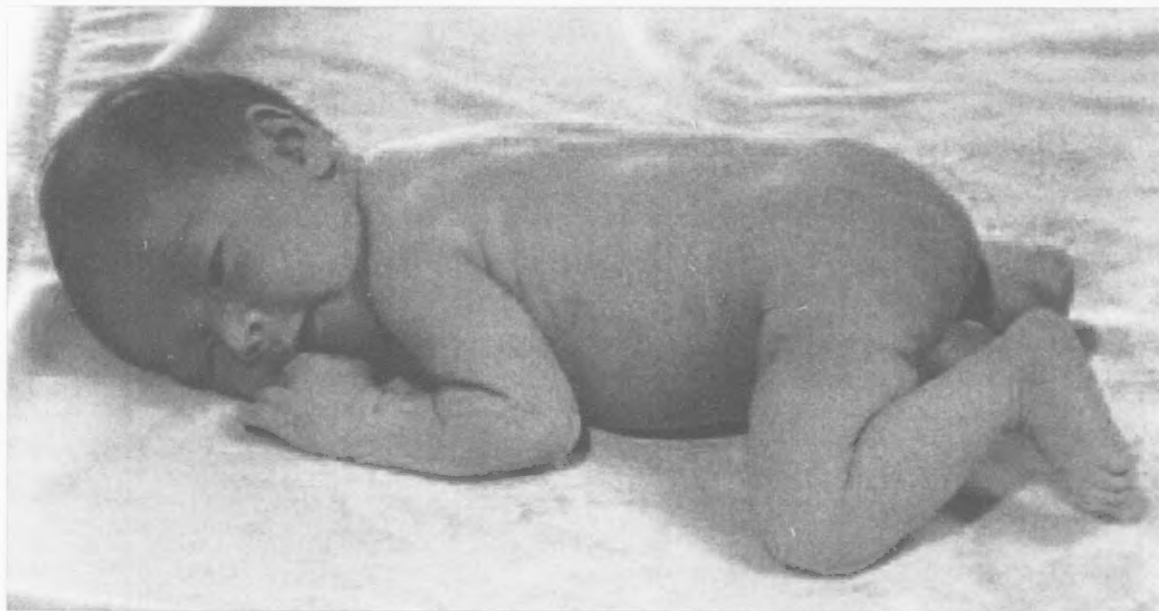
To treat diaper rash:

- Change diaper as soon as it is wet.
- Wash and dry the diaper area carefully at each diaper change.
- Cover the rash with a zinc-based ointment.

CAUTION!

Call the doctor if:

- The skin in the diaper area is very red and peeling.
- There are sores along with the rash.
- You've tried everything on this page and the rash won't go away or is getting worse.



Bathing

It's important to keep your baby clean. Make your baby's bath time fun by talking, singing and playing.

You can give your baby a tub bath every day if you and your baby enjoy it, but it's not necessary.

Every day, you need to:

- Wash your baby's face with warm, clear water.
- Wash your baby's hands and diaper area. Use a clean washcloth and mild soap. Rinse well.
- Wash and dry around the base of the cord.

It may take a while for some babies to learn to like tub baths. This is because babies like to be warm and snug. Many don't like the feel of cool air on their bare, wet skin.

Many babies enjoy an after-bath massage.



Your baby wants you to know...

Give me time to get used to a bath. In a few months, I might like playing with you during bath time so much, I won't want to stop!

Added info...

Until your baby's first tooth comes in, you need to clean the inside of your baby's mouth every day.

Wrap a clean damp washcloth around your finger. Wipe the inside of baby's mouth and around the gums.

If you notice white spots or a white coating that doesn't wipe off, contact your health care provider.

You'll find more information about care of your baby's mouth and teeth on page 88.

CAUTION!

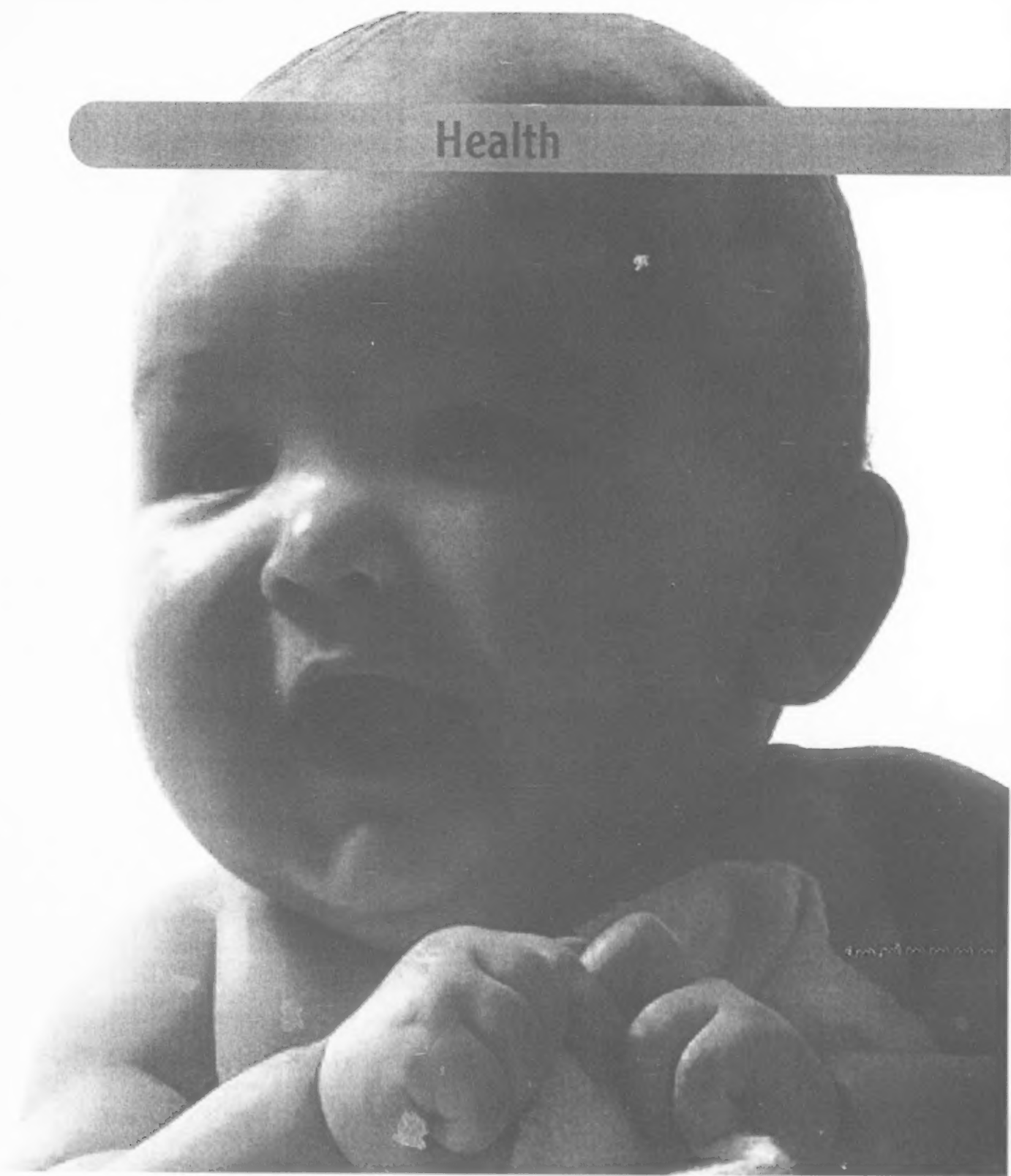
Always test the water before you put your baby in the bath. You can test the water by dipping your elbow. Hot tap water can burn your baby.

Never turn your back or let go of your baby during a bath, even for a second. A baby can drown in less than 2.5 cm (1 inch) of water.

Bath seats and rings are **NOT** safe for babies.

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Health



Hand washing

One of the best and easiest things you can do to keep your baby healthy is to be sure that you—and anyone else who cares for your baby—wash their hands before they feed, wash or dress him.

Hand washing protects you, your baby and your family from germs that could make you all sick.

Hands should be washed:

- After you change a diaper
- Before you eat
- Before you feed your baby
- Before you cook or prepare food
- After you use the toilet
- After you handle anything dirty
- After you pet an animal
- After you wipe your nose—or anyone else's nose



How often does my baby need a check-up? When does she get her needle?

Well-baby check-ups

Your baby will need well baby check-ups at 1 week and 3 or 4 weeks, and at 2, 4 and 6 months.

The health care provider is interested in your baby's growth and development and will ask lots of questions while examining your baby.

During a check-up, the health care provider usually:

- Weighs and measures your baby to be sure she's growing well
- Checks to be sure your baby is developing normally
- Checks your baby's vision and hearing
- Answers your questions about your baby's health, growth and development
- Offers suggestions for how to handle any concerns you have about your baby

Added info...

During your baby's check-up, your health care provider will also ask how **you** are doing. If you have any questions or concerns about your own mental or physical health, this is a good time to talk about them with your health care provider.



Added info...

Make a running list of questions as they come up between visits to your baby's health care provider. This will help you keep track of all your concerns.

Baby's Needles

Immunizations are an important part of keeping your baby healthy. They protect babies from serious illnesses. The needles your baby gets during her first six months protect her from diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, haemophilus influenzae type b, pneumococcal disease.

Your baby should get needles from a public health nurse or doctor at 2, 4 and 6 months.

Added info...

It's your responsibility to keep a record of your baby's needles. You can use the yellow "Personal Immunization Record" card to do this. If you don't have one, you can get one from your local public health office.

Added info...

Depending on where you live, your baby may get check-ups and needles from your doctor or from public health well-baby clinics.

You can get information on where to take your baby from your local public health services office. (Contact information, page 100)



Health

What to say when you talk to a doctor



When your baby is sick, the doctor will ask questions about your baby's illness. It's a good idea to think about what's wrong and why you think your baby is sick before you talk to the doctor.

The doctor will ask about your baby's symptoms:

- Fever? How high? How long has she had it?
- Diarrhea? How often? How much? What does it look like?
- Throwing up? How often? What's it look like?
- Cough or runny nose? Is she having trouble breathing?
- Not feeding?
- Bad rash?
- Is your baby acting differently than usual? Is she very sleepy or fussy?

Write down your baby's symptoms as you notice them. If you can, write down the time you noticed them. Write down anything you think you might forget to tell the doctor.

When you visit or talk to the doctor, make sure you understand everything you're told to do. If you're not sure, ask the doctor to explain.

Your baby wants you to know...

I depend on your loving care to keep me well. When I'm sick I need you to take care of me and get me the help I need.

I don't want to be one of those mothers who's always running to the doctor. But if my baby really is sick, I want him to get the help he needs—fast. How can I tell what to worry about?

When to see a doctor

Don't worry about taking your baby to the doctor too often. Trust your instincts. You know your baby best. If you are concerned about any change in your baby—either physical or in the way he behaves—see your doctor.

Newborns

- See a doctor for anything you are worried or concerned about
- See a doctor if your baby has a temperature higher than 37.2° C (99° F) taken in the baby's armpit.

Added info...

Use a plastic digital thermometer when you take your baby's temperature.

Put the thermometer in the baby's armpit. Keep the thermometer in place by gently pressing your baby's elbow against his side.

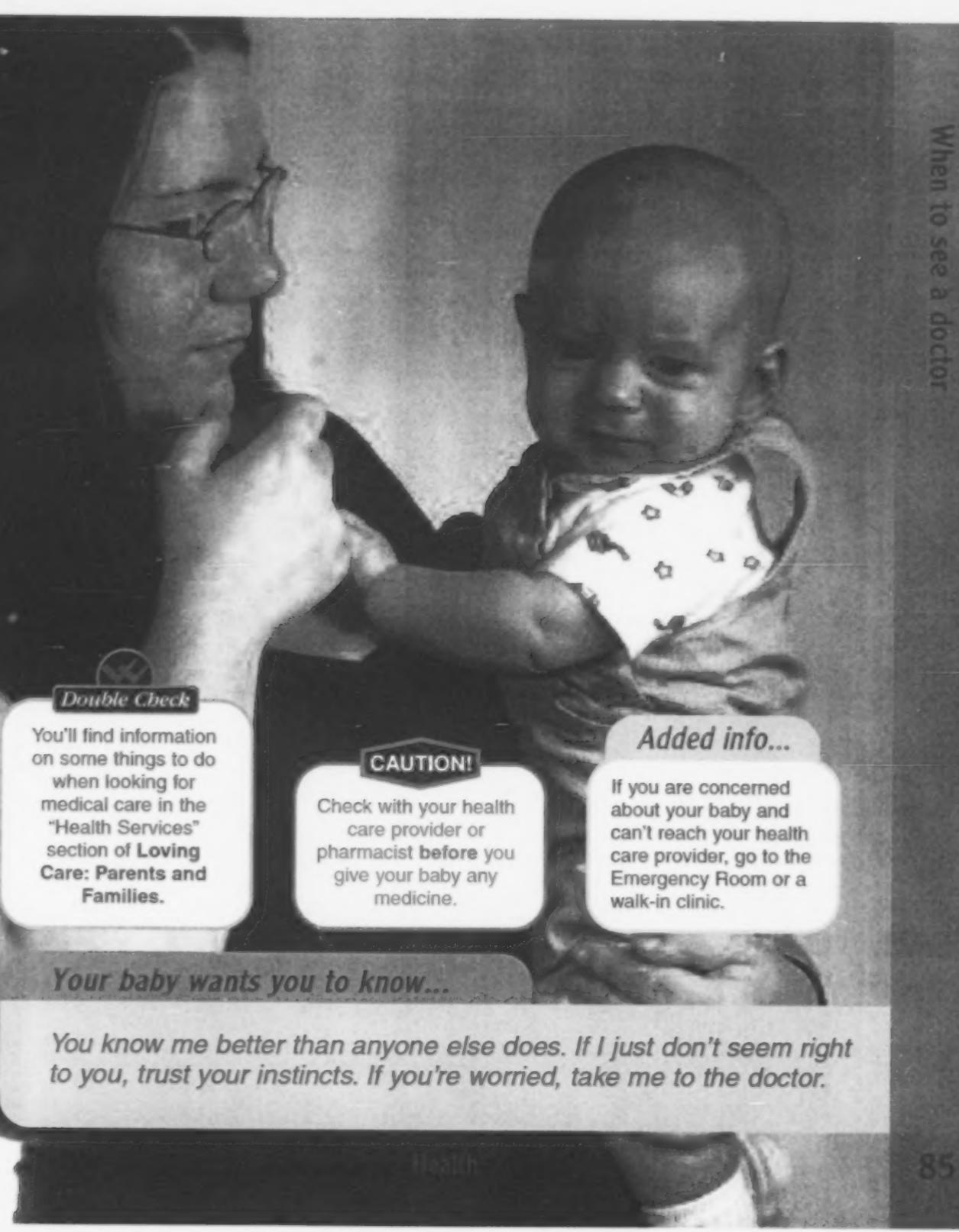
Wait 2 minutes or until you hear the beep. Check the temperature.

Normal temperature is 37° C (98.6° F).

After 3 months

Talk with a health care provider if your baby has any of these symptoms:

- Has a fever over 38.5° C (101° F)
- Is having a hard time breathing
- Is sleepy all the time and you have a hard time waking him up
- Has fewer wet diapers than usual or has dark yellow, smelly pee
- Cries a lot more than usual, or sounds different when crying
- Not interested in eating or drinking
- Keeps rubbing or pulling on his ear
- Has very runny or liquid poop
- Has hard, dry poop
- Has a cough that lasts for several days
- Has diaper rash that is red and peeling or has sores in it
- Is not alert or smiling at you
- Isn't interested in playing



Double Check

You'll find information on some things to do when looking for medical care in the "Health Services" section of **Loving Care: Parents and Families**.

CAUTION!

Check with your health care provider or pharmacist **before** you give your baby any medicine.

Added info...

If you are concerned about your baby and can't reach your health care provider, go to the Emergency Room or a walk-in clinic.

Your baby wants you to know...

You know me better than anyone else does. If I just don't seem right to you, trust your instincts. If you're worried, take me to the doctor.

Common concerns

You should check with your doctor anytime your baby is sick. Fevers, colds, diarrhea and other illnesses in a baby under 6 months of age can be serious. This section covers conditions that you may wonder about but which aren't usually serious.

.....

Baby pimples

Many babies get little white pimples on their face. They're caused by oil in the baby's skin.

Leave them alone. Continue to wash baby's face with warm, clear water. These pimples won't hurt your baby and they will go away on their own.

.....

Swollen genitals and breasts, erections

Both boy and girl babies may have swollen breasts or genitals after they're born. Girl babies may have a little bit of bleeding from their vagina. These are caused by hormones from their mother's pregnancy. They're normal and will go away on their own.

It's normal for a baby boy to get erections. The penis gets hard for no reason. This is nothing to worry about.

Cradle cap

Cradle cap is a dry, yellowish crust on the scalp.

To prevent cradle cap:

You may be able to prevent cradle cap by:

Rinsing well after washing baby's head or hair.

Brushing baby's hair and scalp every day.

To treat cradle cap:

Don't try to pick off the cradle cap.

1. Rub vegetable oil, baby oil or mineral oil into your baby's scalp. Be careful to keep it out of his eyes.
2. Leave it overnight or for at least 15 to 20 minutes.
3. Wash the oil off.
4. Brush gently with a fine-tooth comb to remove the cradle cap.
5. Do this every day until the cradle cap is gone.

See your baby's doctor if this doesn't clear up the cradle cap.

Flat head

Flat head has become more common since babies sleep on their backs to prevent SIDS. This is because new babies have soft skulls. If babies are always in the same position, the back or side of their head can get flattened.

Flat head can be serious. If you have concerns about it, talk to your health care provider.

To prevent flat head:

- Change your baby's position in the crib from day to day. One day lay her with her head at the top of the crib. The next, put her with her head at the foot of the crib.
- Hang a mobile or other interesting thing on the side of the crib facing the room. This will give her a reason to change the position of her head.
- Give your baby lots of awake time on her tummy. It's important that babies sleep on their back. But when your baby is awake and someone is with her, lay her on her tummy. Make tummy time fun. Lie on the floor with your baby and play together. Or lie on the floor with baby laying tummy down on your chest.

Added info...

Your baby can get flat head from spending too much time in any reclining seat—a car seat, baby seat or stroller.

If your baby spends lots of time in a seat, be sure she has lots of time on her tummy when she's awake.

Pee and poop

Pee

Baby pee should be light yellow and not too smelly. Check with your health care provider if your baby's pee:

- Has a strong smell.
- Is dark yellow.

Poop

Your baby's poop will look different as your baby grows.

- Right after birth, his poop will be black and sticky.
- During the first week, it turns greenish brown.
- After the first week, a breastfed baby's poop will be yellowish and runny. Sometimes it looks as if it has seeds in it. It's normal for a breastfed baby to go several days without pooping.

CAUTION!

Call your health care provider if your baby's poop smells bad, is watery, and is different from the way it usually looks. A baby with diarrhea can lose a lot of fluid. This can make her very sick, very fast.

You should also check with **your health care provider** when your baby's poop is hard and dry, if:

- He's fussy and seems uncomfortable.
- He seems to be straining to poop.
- He isn't pooping as often as usual.

Dental health

Baby teeth are important. Your child needs them to chew and speak clearly. Baby teeth also help to shape your child's face and guide adult teeth into place. They're worth taking care of!

.....

Dental Care

Before the teeth come in:

Clean the inside of your baby's mouth once a day.

- Wash your hands.
- Wrap a clean damp wash cloth around your finger.
- Wipe the inside of baby's mouth and around the gums.

After the first tooth comes in:

Twice a day—morning and evening
let baby sit and chew on a soft-bristled brush with a small smear of fluoride toothpaste.

When the baby's done, brush her teeth.
You don't need to use more toothpaste.

Check for signs of tooth decay

When you brush your baby's teeth, lift up the lips and look at the front and back teeth. If you notice brown or white spots on your baby's teeth, call a dentist right away. This may be the first sign of decay.



Added info...

Most babies don't need a fluoride supplement. Talk to your dentist or dental hygienist if you are concerned about this.

CAUTION!

Keep toothpaste out of children's reach.
Too much fluoride is dangerous.

Teething

Most babies first teeth start to come in at around 6 months. Some start teething a little earlier.

Teething can make your baby restless and cranky. Some parents have found that these ideas help their baby feel better:

- Give your baby something safe to chew on—for example, a cold, damp face cloth or a teething ring. Whatever you give your baby to chew on should be clean. Wash it often. Use warm soapy water. Rinse well.

CAUTION!

- **DON'T use teething gels.** They can affect your baby's health or cause choking by making the throat numb.

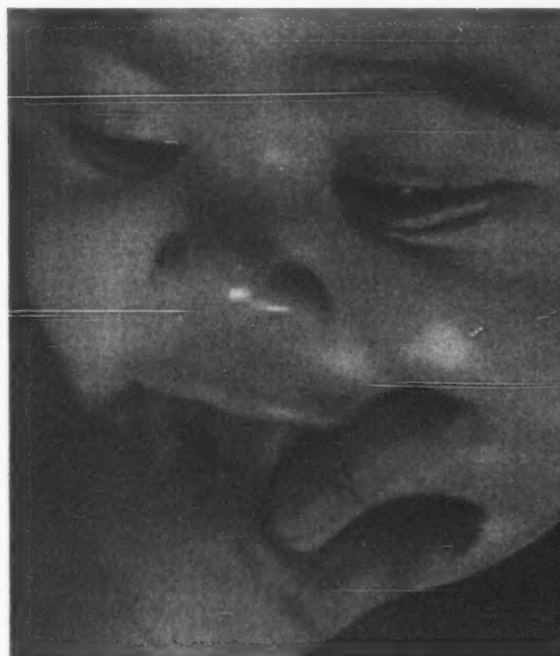
Check with your dentist, dental hygienist, health care provider or pharmacist if you think your baby might need medicine for teething pain. Ask which kind to use and how much is best for your baby.

- **DON'T use teething biscuits.** Teething biscuits are high in sugar. They may cause cavities or choking.

- **Massage your baby's gums using a clean finger.**

Fever or diarrhea is not a normal part of teething. If your baby has a fever or diarrhea for more than 24 hours, call your doctor.

If your baby continues to be restless or cranky, check with your health care provider.



Your baby wants you to know...

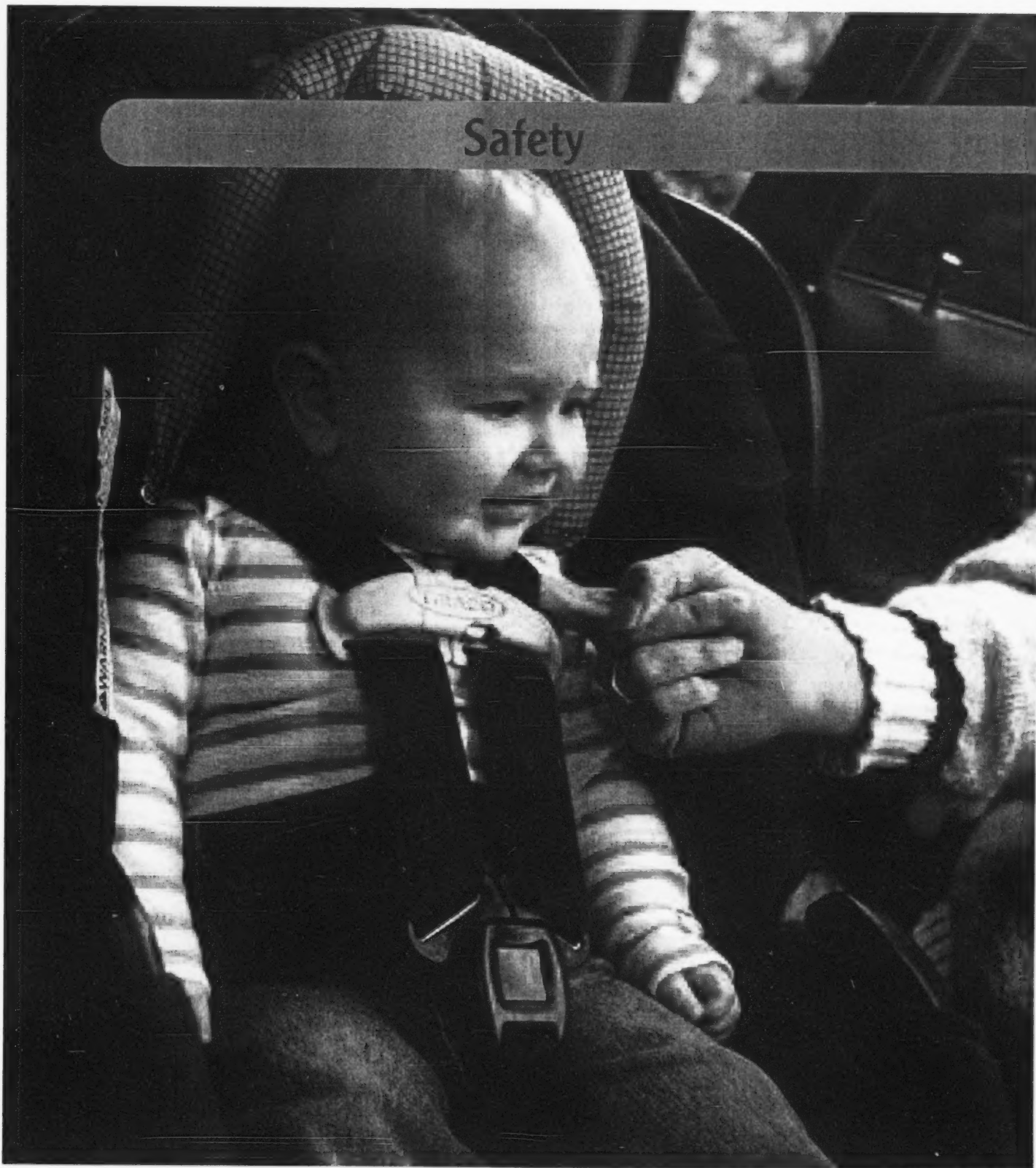
I need your loving care most when I'm feeling cranky.

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Safety



Car safety

Babies must be in a rear-facing, CSA approved infant car seat every time they ride in a car. This is the law in Nova Scotia. A safe seat will have the mark shown below. Even if you don't own a car, your baby still needs to be in a car seat when riding in a taxi or with friends, family or grandparents.

Make sure every car seat your baby rides in has been put in the car correctly. Make sure everyone who cares for your child knows how to strap your baby into the seat the right way.

When you buy a car seat—new or used—make sure:

- It comes with an instruction booklet.
- It has a label that says it meets CMV Safety Standard 213.1.
- It is less than 10 years old or not past its expiry date.

Before you buy, check with Transport Canada to be sure there have been no problems or recalls with the car seat you are considering. You can contact Transport Canada at:

Phone: 1-800-333-0510 (Toll free)

Website: www.tc.gc.ca/roadsafety
(Click on Child Safety)

Look for this safety mark:



The safest place for a car seat is in the middle of the back seat if it can be properly installed there.

Installing a car seat the right way is not always easy. But you can do it if you follow the instructions that come with the car seat and the instructions in the Owner's Manual for your car. If you still have questions after you have tried to install the seat, call Child Safety Link or your local public health office to find out where you can learn to install car seats.

(Contact information, pages 100, 103)

CAUTION!

If a car seat has been in a crash, it shouldn't be used again.

Before you buy a used car seat, ask if it has ever been in a crash. If you can't find out for certain that a used car seat has **never** been in a crash, don't buy it.

CAUTION!

Never leave your baby alone in a car, even for a few minutes.

CAUTION!

Your baby needs a smoke-free car! This includes your own car and any other cars your baby rides in. Smoking in a small, enclosed space like a car is 23 times more toxic than smoking in a house.

Secondhand smoke is always bad for babies and children. Don't let anyone smoke in your home or car. Don't allow anyone to smoke around your children.

Added info...

You'll find more information about how to install car seats correctly in **A Parent's Guide to Car Seats—Choosing and Using the Right Car Seat**. You can get a copy from Child Safety Link or your local public health office. (Contact information, page 100)



Safety

Safety at home

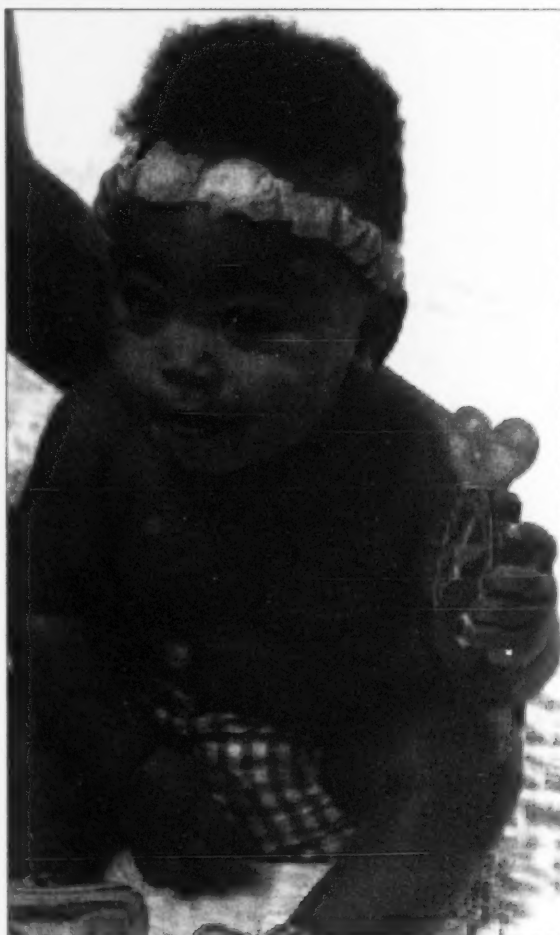
Your baby needs:

- **A smoke-free home.** If you smoke do it outside, away from your baby. Don't let other people smoke around your baby.
- **Safe baby furniture.** Whatever you buy should be clean, sturdy and meet safety standards. Buy only CSA approved cribs, playpens and strollers. Baby furniture should have a label that says who made it and when it was made. The label should also give a model number. Cribs must be made after 1986. Strollers must be made after 1985. Playpens must be made after 1976.
- **Safe toys.** Make sure that any toys your baby plays with are right for his age. Toys that are safe for older children are not always safe for babies. Check your baby's toys often. Throw away broken or damaged toys.

Safe baby toys:

- Have no sharp points or edges
- Have no small parts that could break or pull off
- Are bigger than your baby's fist—too big to swallow or choke on

Check the toy package for safety information. Read and follow all directions. Throw away all plastic, cellophane, or styrofoam package materials.



Added info...

You can find information about recalls of baby toys and furniture from Consumer Product Safety. (Contact information, page 103)

Added info...

First aid for children can be different from what you would do for an adult. Many parents take a first aid course to learn what to do if their child is hurt.

St. John Ambulance and the Red Cross both offer first aid courses. Check to see what's offered near you. (Contact information, page 103)

CAUTION!

Babies love to chew. Anything a baby can hold will go right into his mouth.

Be sure anything your baby plays with is clean and safe to chew on.

Protect your baby

Falls

- On a change table, use the safety strap and keep at least one hand on your baby at all times. Consider using the floor instead of a table so your baby can't fall.
- Unless your baby is in a safe crib, never leave her alone with no one watching. Babies can wiggle off of a sofa or other surface.

Overheating

- Infants and small children overheat easily in hot, humid weather. Overheating can cause serious health problems.
- During hot weather:
 - Keep your baby in cool, shady places.
 - Dress her in light clothing.
 - Give her baths in lukewarm water to help keep her cool.
 - Feed your baby more often to give her the fluid she needs. Babies don't need to drink water.
 - Use fans or air conditioners indoors.

Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection issues Humidex and Health Advisories when the weather is hot enough to cause concern. Listen for these on local radio and TV stations on very hot days.

Pets

- Never leave your baby alone with a pet that could hurt her—for example, a dog or cat. Talk to your vet about the best way to introduce your pet to the new baby.
- To protect your baby from Salmonella germs, remove all pet reptiles—turtles, lizards and snakes—from your home before the baby is born.
- Wash your hands after handling reptiles or animal waste.

Burns

- Don't carry hot liquids when you're carrying your baby.
- Don't drink anything hot while you're feeding her.
- Don't hold your baby while cooking.
- Check the temperature of the bath water before you put the baby in. The water should be lukewarm. Check the temperature by dipping your elbow into the water. If it feels hot to you, it's too hot for your baby.
- Make sure your home has a working smoke alarm on every floor.
- Keep babies out of direct sunlight. Babies burn very quickly in the sun. When you go outdoors, your baby should be shaded and covered. It's not safe to use a sunscreen before your baby is 6 months old.

Choking

- Keep anything small enough to fit into your baby's mouth out of reach.
- Avoid clothing with long belts, strings or ties.

Drowning

- Hold on when bathing your baby. Don't leave her alone or turn your back. Babies can drown in just 2.5 cm (1 inch) of water.
- Don't use a baby bath seat or bath ring in the tub. Health Canada warns parents that baby bath seats can cause drowning

Added info...

Soothers

Many babies are happy sucking on their fists or fingers. Some enjoy a soother.

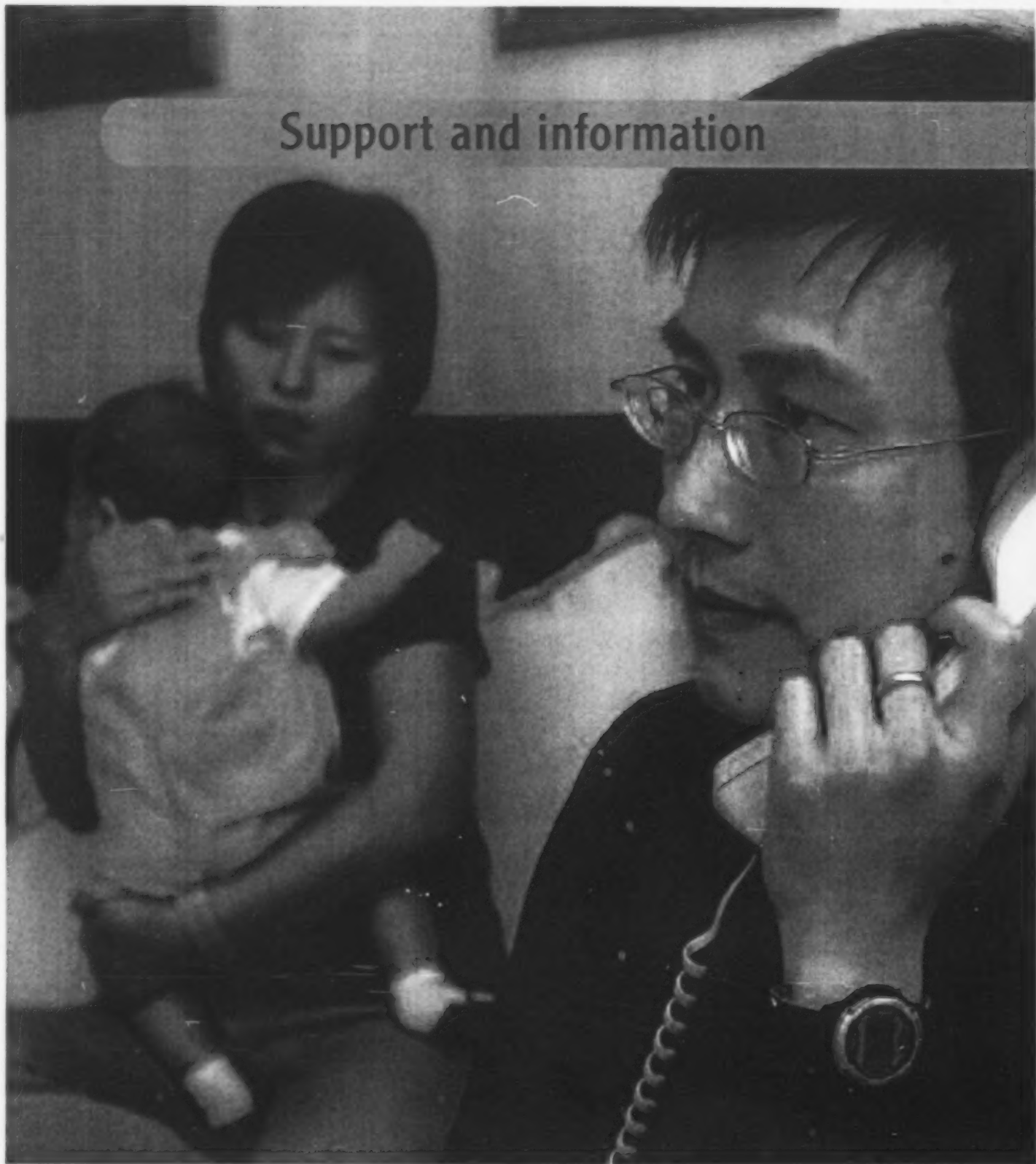
If you give your baby a soother:

- Make sure it can't come apart.
- Keep it clean. Use warm soapy water, and rinse it well before giving it to your baby.
- Get a new one when it becomes sticky or has cracks or tears.
- Don't dip a soother in anything sweet.
- Don't put it in your mouth before giving it to your baby.
- Don't put a soother on a string around baby's neck. Strings can choke.
- Don't pin soothers to clothes. Pins can hurt.



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Support and information



Provincial services

Department of Community Services

You can connect with local Community Services offices through their website:

www.gov.ns.ca/coms/index.html

Click on "Find your local office" in the left hand column.

- Western Regional Office.....902-679-6715
- Northern Regional Office.....902-755-7023
- Central Regional Office902-424-4754
- Eastern Regional Office.....902-563-3302

Department of Health Promotion and Protection

You'll find information and resources for health promotion in Nova Scotia.

- Website: www.gov.ns.ca/hpp

District Health Authorities

The District Health Authority website is a good source of information about local programs and services.

- Annapolis Valley Health
www.avdha.nshealth.ca/
- Cape Breton District Health Authority
www.cbdha.nshealth.ca/
- Capital Health
www.cdha.nshealth.ca/
- Colchester East Hants Health Authority
www.cehha.nshealth.ca/
- Cumberland Health Authority
www.cha.nshealth.ca/

- Guysborough Antigonish Strait Health Authority
www.erhb.ns.ca/default.htm
- Pictou County Health Authority
www.pcha.nshealth.ca/
- South Shore Health
www.ssdha.nshealth.ca/
- South West Nova Health
www.swndha.nshealth.ca/

Nova Scotia Hearing and Speech Centres

Nova Scotia Hearing and Speech Centres are located in 25 communities across the province. Check this website to find one near you.

- Website: www.nshsc.ns.ca

Public Health Services

- Amherst 1-800-767-3319
or 667-3319
- Annapolis Royal 532-0490
- Antigonish 863-2743
- Arichat 226-2944
- Baddeck 295-2178
- Barrington Passage 637-2430
- Berwick 538-3700
- Bridgewater 543-0850
- Canso 366-2925
- Cheticamp 224-2410
- Digby 245-2557
- Elmsdale 883-3500
- Glace Bay 842-4050
- Guysborough 533-3502
- Halifax Regional Municipality 481-5800
- Head of Jeddore 889-2143
- Inverness 258-1920

- Liverpool354-5737
- Lunenburg.....634-4014
- Meteghan645-2325
- Middle Musquodoboit.....384-2370
- Middleton825-3385
- Neil's Harbour336-2295
- New Germany644-2710
- New Glasgow.....752-5151
- New Waterford862-2204
- Port Hawkesbury.....625-1693
- Sheet Harbour885-2470
- Shelburne875-2623
- Sherbrooke522-2212
- St Peter's.....1-888-272-0096
(Voice mail only)
- Sydney.....563-2400
- Sydney Mines736-6245
- Truro893-5820
- Windsor.....798-2264
- Wolfville542-6310
- Yarmouth.....742-7141

Other resources and services

Breastfeeding Support

- La Leche League Canada www.lllc.ca/

Child Care

You can find information about childcare in your community through your local Public Health Services office or Family Resource Centre.

Early Intervention Nova Scotia

This website will help you locate the Early Intervention program nearest your home.

- www.earlyintervention.net/

Family Resource Centres

Check the Directory of Nova Scotia Family Resource Centres for other Family Resource Centres and resources in your community:

www.nscouncilfamily.org/FRC_Directory/Index.htm

Community Family Resource Centres

Amherst

- Maggie's Place (Cumberland County)
12 Laplanche St , Amherst
Phone: (902) 667-7250

Annapolis Valley-Hants County

- Kids Action Program
Offers programs in several sites.
For information:
Phone: (902) 582-1375

Antigonish

- Kids First (Antigonish County)
27 St. Andrew Street, Antigonish
Phone: (902) 863-3848

Bridgetown

- Family Matters (Annapolis County Family Resource Centre)
26 Bay Rd., Suite 202, Bridgetown
Phone: (902) 665-2622

Bridgewater

- Family Support Centre (Lunenburg County)
156 York Street, Bridgewater
Phone: (902) 543-1301

Digby

- Digby County Family Resource Centre
19 Prince William Street, Digby
Phone: (902) 245-6464

Guysborough

- Kids First (Guysborough County)
105 Queen Street, Guysborough
Phone: (902) 533-3881

Halifax Regional Municipality

- Bayers Westwood Family Resource Centre
3499 McAlpine Avenue, Halifax
Phone: (902) 454-9444
- Dartmouth Family Centre
107 Albro Lake Road, Dartmouth
Phone: (902) 464-8234
- Eastern Shore Family Resource Centre
5228 Highway 7, Suite 203, Porters Lake Shopping Centre, Porters Lake
Phone: (902) 827-1461
Toll-free: 1-866-847-1461
- Parent N' Tot Meeting Place
3524 Dutch Village Rd., Fairview
Phone: (902) 443-9569
- Memory Lane Family Place
22 Memory Lane, Lower Sackville
Phone: (902) 864-6363
- Musquodoboit Valley Family Resource Centre
12280 Highway 224, Middle Musquodoboit
(above Haverstock Pharmacy)
Phone: (902) 384-2794
- North End Parent Resource Centre
5475 Uniacke Street, Halifax
Phone: (902) 492-0133

- Parents and Children Together Resource Centre
1114 Cole Harbour Road, Suite 102, Dartmouth
Phone: (902) 434-8952

- Preston and Area Family Resource Centre
East Preston Business Centre,
Suite 501 — 1900 Highway 7, East Preston
Phone: (902) 462-7266

- Single Parent Centre
3 Sylvia Ave, Spryfield
Phone: (902) 479-3031

Liverpool

- Queen's County Family Resource Centre
108 College St., Liverpool
Phone: (902) 354-7176

New Glasgow

- Kids First (Pictou County)
610 East River Road, New Glasgow
Phone: (902) 755-5437

Shelburne

- Shelburne County Family Resource Centre
35 King Street, King Street Centre Building, Shelburne
Phone: (902) 875-3256

Sydney

- Cape Breton Family Place Resource Centre
106 Townsend Street, Sydney
Phone: (902) 562-5616

Truro

- Maggie's Place (Colchester County)
129 Arthur Street, Truro
Phone: (902) 895-0200

Windsor

- Family Resource Centre of West Hants
War Memorial Building, 78 Thomas Street
Phone: (902) 798-5961

Yarmouth

- **Parents' Place - Yarmouth Family Resource Centre**
34 Barnard Street, Yarmouth
Phone: (902) 749-1718

Acadian/Francophone Family Resource Centres*Saulnierville*

- **La Pirouette, centre de ressources et de services à la famille, Saulnierville**
Phone: (902) 769-5854

First Nations Family Resource Centres

- **Mi'kmaq Child Development Centre**
2162 Gottingen Street, Halifax
Phone: (902) 422-7850

Military Family Resource Centres

- *Halifax site*
Halifax Military Community Centre,
Connolly Street, Windsor Park, Halifax
Phone Reception: (902) 427-7780
- *Shearwater site*
Hampton Gray Memorial Centre, just off
Labrador Avenue, 12 Wing Shearwater
Phone Reception: (902) 720-1885
- *Sydney site*
The Halifax MFRC operates a part-time
office in the garrison at Victoria Park in
Sydney:
1 Desbarres Street, Victoria Park, Sydney
Phone Reception: (902) 563-7100 ext 7107

*The MFRC can be reached by telephone
24/7 at: (902) 427-7788.*

Literacy Resources

- **Read to Me Program**
<http://readtome.ca/>

Safety Resources

- **Child Safety Link: (902) 470-6496
or 1-866-288-1388**
childsafetylink.ca/
(Take a virtual home safety tour. Click
on "Parents", then "Home Safety".)
- **Consumer Product Safety**
(For information about product recalls):
Phone: 1-866-662-0666
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/advisories-avis/index_e.html
- **Poison Control:**
For information about poisons:
1-800-565-8161
In an emergency: 911
- **Safe Kids Canada**
safekidscanada.ca
- **Transport Canada**
(For car seat safety information):
Phone: 1-800-333-0510 (Toll free)
tc.gc.ca/roadsafety
(Click on "Child Safety")
- **Smoke-free Around Me**
smokefreearoundme.ca
- **Canadian Red Cross Society—Nova Scotia**
Phone: (902) 463-5646 or
1-888-577-7267
redcross.ca
- **St. John Ambulance—Nova Scotia**
Phone: (902) 463-5046 or
1-800-565-5056
sja.ca

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Thanks!



Thanks!

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- Cape Breton Family Place, Sydney
- Parent's Place Family Resource Centre, Yarmouth
- Kids First Family Resource Centre, Guysborough
- Dartmouth Family Centre, Dartmouth
- Maggie's Place Family Resource Centre, Truro
- Maggie's Place Family Resource Centre, Amherst

- Supportive Housing for Young Mothers Advisory Board, Halifax
- East Preston Family Resource Centre, East Preston
- Native Council of Nova Scotia, Liverpool

Expert Reviewers

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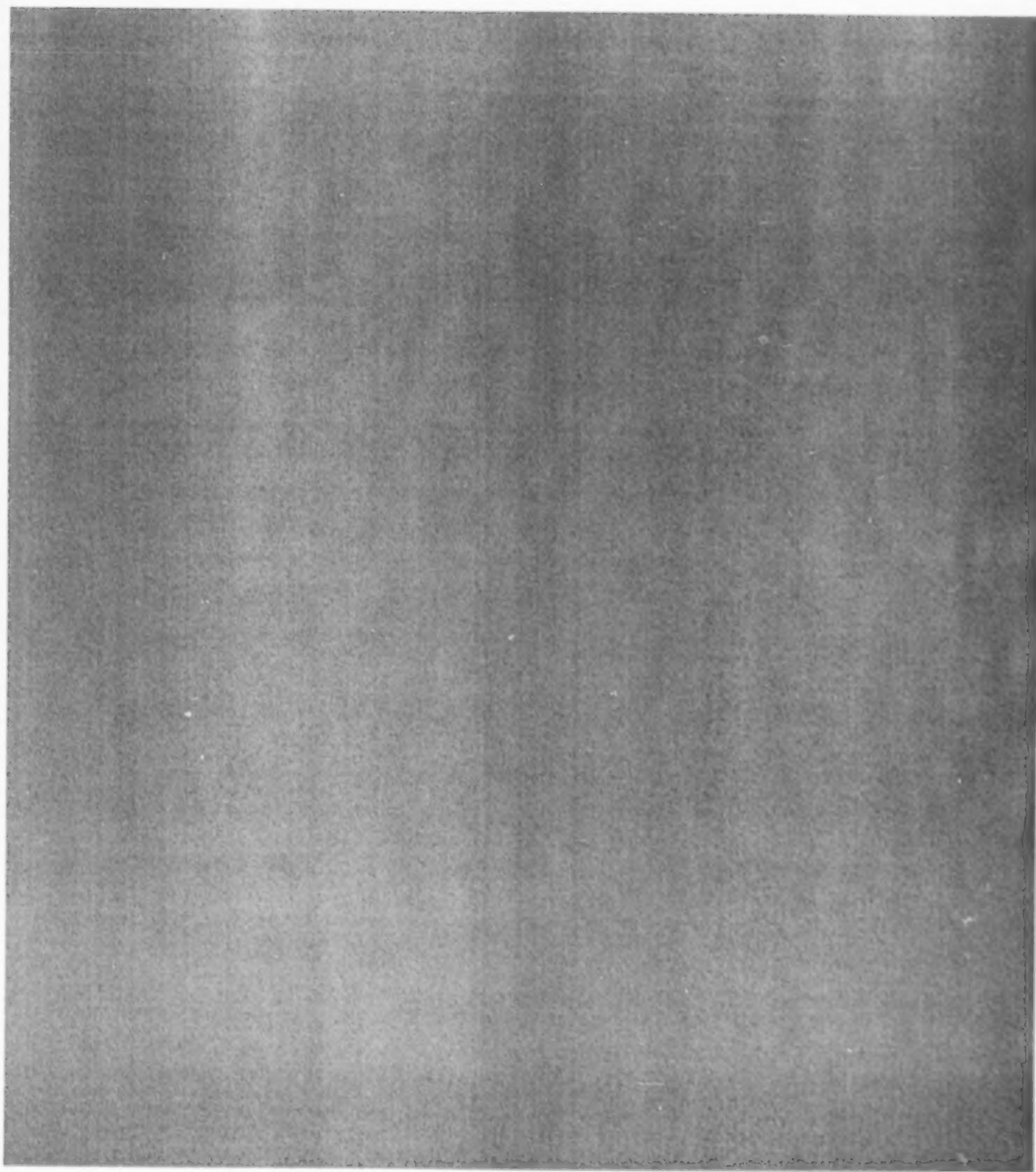
Thanks!

Thanks!









Loving Care



Birth to 6 Months


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